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d.d. Miss Fletcher

July 1918. from E.S.
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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

INVOCATION : WAR POEMS AND OTHERS
(*Elkin Mathews, Cork Street*)

ARDOURS AND ENDURANCES

Malcolm Arbuthnot.

1915.

ARDOURS AND ENDURANCES

ALSO A FAUN'S HOLIDAY & POEMS AND PHANTASIES BY

ROBERT NICHOLS

LONDON
CHATTO & WINDUS
MCMXVIII

First published June 21, 1917.
Second edition, July, 1917.
Reprinted, October, 1917.
Reprinted, February, 1918.

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My thanks are due to the editor of the *Times* and of the *Nation*, to the editors of the *Palatine Review*, and to Messrs. Blackwell, Oxford, the publishers of "Oxford Poetry, 1915," and "Oxford Poetry, 1916," for permission to reprint certain of these poems

R. M. B. N.

1917.

INTRODUCTION

1. *Of the nature of the poet:*

"We are (often) so impressed by the power of poetry that we think of it as something made by a wonderful and unusual person: we do not realize the fact that all the wonder and marvel is in our own brains, that the poet is ourselves. He speaks our language better than we do merely because he is more skilful with it than we are; his skill is part of our skill, his power of our power; generations of English-speaking men and women have made us sensible to these things, and our sensibility comes from the same source that the poet's power of stimulating it comes from. Given a little more sensitiveness to external stimuli, a little more power of associating ideas, a co-ordination of the functions of expression somewhat more apt, a sense of rhythm somewhat keener than the average—given these things we should be poets, too, even as he is. . . . *He is one of us.*"

2. *Of what English poetry consists:*

"English poetry is not a rhythm of sound, but a rhythm of ideas, and the flow of attention-stresses (*i.e.*, varying qualities of words and cadence) which determines its beauty is inseparably connected with the thought; for each of them is a judgment of identity, or a judgment of relation, or an expression of relation, and not a thing of mere empty sound. . . . He who would think of it as a pleasing arrangement of vocal sounds has missed all chance of ever understanding its meaning. There awaits him only the barren generalities of a foreign prosody, tedious, pedantic, fruitless. And he will flounder ceaselessly amid the scattered timbers of its iambuses, spondees, dactyls, tribrachs, never reaching the firm ground of truth."

"An Introduction to the Scientific Study of English Poetry,"* *by* Mark Liddell.

* *Published by Grant Richards* (1902). *This remarkable book, establishing English poetry as a thing governed from within by its own necessities, and not by rules of æsthetics imposed on it from without, formulates principles which, unperceived, have governed English poetry from the earliest times, which find their greatest exemplar in Shakespeare, and which, though beginning to be realized by the less pedantic of the moderns, are in its pages for the first time lucidly expounded and—such is their adequacy—can, in the end, only be regarded as indubitably proven.*—R. M. B. N., 1917.

BOOK I
ARDOURS AND ENDURANCES

To the Memory of my Trusty and Gallant Friends: HAROLD STUART GOUGH (*King's Royal Rifle Corps*) and RICHARD PINSENT (*the Worcester Regiment*)

For what is life if measured by the space,
Not by the act ?"

Ben Jonson.

THE SUMMONS

I.—TO——

Asleep within the deadest hour of night
And, turning with the earth, I was aware
How suddenly the eastern curve was bright,
As when the sun arises from his lair.
But not the sun arose: it was thy hair
Shaken up heaven in tossing leagues of light.

Since then I know that neither night nor day
May I escape thee, O my heavenly hell!
Awake, in dreams, thou springest to waylay
And should I dare to die, I know full well
Whose voice would mock me in the mourning
bell,
Whose face would greet me in hell's fiery way.

II.—THE PAST

How to escape the bondage of the past ?
I fly thee, yet my spirit finds no calms
Save when she deems her rocked within those arms
To which, from which she ne'er was caught or cast.

O sadness of a heart so spent in vain,
That drank its age's fuel in an hour:
For whom the whole world burning had not power
To quick with life the smouldered wick again !

III.—THE RECKONING

The whole world burns, and with it burns my flesh.
Arise, thou spirit spent by sterile tears;
Thine eyes were ardent once, thy looks were fresh,
Thy brow shone bright amid thy shining peers.
Fame calls thee not, thou who hast vainly strayed
So far for her; nor Passion, who in the past
Gave thee her ghost to wed and to be paid;
Nor Love, whose anguish only learned to last.

Honour it is that calls: canst thou forget
Once thou wert strong? Listen; the solemn call
Sounds but this once again. Put by regret
For summons missed, or thou hast missed them all.
Body is ready, Fortune pleased; O let
Not the poor Past cost the proud Future's fall.

FAREWELL TO PLACE OF COMFORT

FAREWELL TO PLACE OF COMFORT

For the last time, maybe, upon the knoll
I stand. The eve is golden; languid, sad. . . .
Day like a tragic actor plays his rôle
To the last whispered word, and falls gold-clad.
I, too, take leave of all I ever had.

They shall not say I went with heavy heart:
Heavy I am, but soon I shall be free;
I love them all, but O I now depart
A little sadly, strangely, fearfully,
As one who goes to try a Mystery.

The bell is sounding down in Dedham Vale:
Be still, O bell! too often standing here
When all the air was tremulous, fine, and pale,
Thy golden note so calm, so still, so clear,
Out of my stony heart has struck a tear.

And now tears are not mine. I have release
From all the former and the later pain;
Like the mid-sea I rock in boundless peace,
Soothed by the charity of the deep sea rain. . . .
Calm rain! Calm sea! Calm found, long sought
in vain.

O bronzen pines, evening of gold and blue,
Steep mellow slope, brimmed twilit pools below,
Hushed trees, still vale dissolving in the dew,
Farewell! Farewell! There is no more to do.
We have been happy. Happy now I go.

THE APPROACH

I.—IN THE GRASS: HALT BY ROADSIDE

In my tired, helpless body
I feel my sunk heart ache;
But suddenly, loudly
The far, the great guns shake.

Is it sudden terror
Burdens my heart? My hand
Flies to my head. I listen . . .
And do not understand.

Is death so near, then?
From this blaze of light
Do I plunge suddenly
Into Vortex? Night?

Guns again! the quiet
Shakes at the vengeful voice. . . .
It is terrible pleasure.
I do not fear: I rejoice.

II.—THE DAY'S MARCH

The battery grides and jingles,
Mile succeeds to mile;
Shaking the noonday sunshine,
The guns lunge out awhile,
And then are still awhile.

We amble along the highway;
The reeking, powdery dust
Ascends and cakes our faces
With a striped, sweaty crust.

Under the still sky's violet
The heat thróbs on the air. . . .
The white road's dusty radiance
Assumes a dark glare.

With a head hot and heavy,
And eyes that cannot rest,
And a black heart burning
In a stifled breast,

I sit in the saddle,
I feel the road unroll,
And keep my senses straightened
Toward to-morrow's goal.

There, over unknown meadows
Which we must reach at last,
Day and night thunders
A black and chilly blast.

Heads forget heaviness,
Hearts forget spleen,
For by that mighty winnowing
Being is blown clean.

Light in the eyes again,
Strength in the hand,
A spirit dares, dies, forgives,
And can understand!

And, best! Love comes back again
After grief and shame,
And along the wind of death
Throws a clean flame.

* * * *

The battery grides and jingles,
Mile succeeds to mile;
Suddenly battering the silence
The guns burst out awhile.

. . . .

I lift my head and smile.

III.—NEARER

Nearer and ever nearer. . . .
My body, tired but tense,
Hovers 'twixt vague pleasure
And tremulous confidence.

Arms to have and to use them
And a soul to be made
Worthy if not worthy;
If afraid, unafraid.

To endure for a little,
To endure and have done:
Men I love about me,
Over me the sun!

And should at last suddenly
Fly the speeding death,
The four great quarters of heaven
Receive this little breath.

BATTLE

I.—NOON

It is midday: the deep trench glares. . . .
A buzz and blaze of flies. . . .
The hot wind puffs the giddy airs. . .
The great sun rakes the skies.

No sound in all the stagnant trench
Where forty standing men
Endure the sweat and grit and stench,
Like cattle in a pen.

Sometimes a sniper's bullet whirs
Or twangs the whining wire;
Sometimes a soldier sighs and stirs
As in hell's frying fire.

From out a high cool cloud descends
An aeroplane's far moan. . . .
The sun strikes down, the thin cloud
rends . . .
The black speck travels on.

And sweating, dizzied, isolate
In the hot trench beneath,
We bide the next shrewd move of fate
Be it of life or death.

II.—NIGHT BOMBARDMENT

Softly in the silence the evening rain descends. . . .
The soft wind lifts the rain-mist, flurries it, and spends
Its grief in mournful sighs, drifting from field to field,
Soaking the draggled sprays which the low hedges wield
As they labour in the wet and the load of the wind.
The last light is dimming; night comes on behind.

I hear no sound but the wind and the rain,
And trample of horses, loud and lost again
Where the waggons in the mist rumble dimly on
Bringing more shell.
The last gleam is gone.
It is not day or night; only the mists unroll
And blind with their sorrow the sight of my soul.

I hear the wind weeping in the hollow overhead:
She goes searching for the forgotten dead
Hidden in the hedges or trodden into muck
Under the trenches, or maybe limply stuck
Somewhere in the branches of a high lonely tree—
He was a sniper once. They never found his body.

I see the mist drifting. I hear the wind and rain,
And on my clammy face the oozed breath of the slain
Seems to be blowing. Almost I have heard
In the shuddering drift the lost dead's last word:

Go home, go home, go to my house;
Knock at the door, knock hard, arouse
My wife and the children—that you must do—
What do you say?—Tell the children, too—
Knock at the door, knock hard, arouse
The living. Say: the dead won't come back to this house.
O . . . but it's cold—I soak in the rain—
Shrapnel found me—I shan't come home again—
No, not home again!

The mourning voices trail
Away into rain, into darkness . . . the pale
Soughing of the night drifts on in between.

The Voices were as if the dead had never been.

O melancholy heavens, O melancholy fields,
The glad, full darkness grows complete and shields
Me from your appeal.
With a terrible delight
I hear far guns low like oxen at the night.
Flames disrupt the sky.
The work is begun.
"Action!" My guns crash, flame, rock and stun
Again and again. Soon the soughing night
Is loud with their clamour and leaps with their light.

The imperative chorus rises sonorous and fell:
My heart glows lighted as by fires of hell.
Sharply I pass the terse orders down.
The guns blare and rock. The hissing rain is blown
Athwart the hurtled shell that shrilling, shrilling goes
Away into the dark, to burst a cloud of rose
Over German trenches.
A pause: I stand and see
Lifting into the night like founts incessantly
The pistol-lights' pale spores upon the glimmering air . . .
Under them furrowed trenches empty, pallid, bare . . .
And rain snowing trenchward ghostly and white.

O dead in the hedges, sleep ye well to-night!

III.—COMRADES: AN EPISODE

Before, before he was aware
The 'Verey' light had risen . . . on the air
It hung glistering. . . .
And he could not stay his hand
From moving to the barbed wire's broken strand.
A rifle cracked.
He fell.
Night waned. He was alone. A heavy shell
Whispered itself passing high, high overhead.
His wound was wet to his hand: for still it bled
On to the glimmering ground.
Then with a slow, vain smile his wound he bound,
Knowing, of course, he'd not see home again—
Home whose thought he put away.
His men
Whispered: "Where's Mister Gates?" "Out on the wire."
"I'll get him," said one. . . .
Dawn blinked, and the fire

Of the Germans heaved up and down the line.
" Stand to !"
Too late ! " I'll get him." " O the swine !
When we might get him in yet safe and whole !"
" Corporal didn't see 'un fall out on patrol,
Or he'd 'a got 'un." " Sssh !"
" No talking there."
A whisper: " 'A went down at the last flare."
Meanwhile the Maxims toc-toc-tocked; their swish
Of bullets told death lurked against the wish.
No hope for him !
His corporal, as one shamed,
Vainly and helplessly his ill-luck blamed.

* * * * *

Then Gates slowly saw the morn
Break in a rosy peace through the lone thorn
By which he lay, and felt the dawn-wind pass
Whispering through the pallid, stalky grass
Of No-Man's Land. . . .
And the tears came
Scaldingly sweet, more lovely than a flame.
He closed his eyes: he thought of home
And grit his teeth. He knew no help could come. . . .

* * * * *

The silent sun over the earth held sway,
Occasional rifles cracked and far away

A heedless speck, a 'plane, slid on alone,
Like a fly traversing a cliff of stone.

"I must get back," said Gates aloud, and heaved
At his body. But it lay bereaved
Of any power. He could not wait till night . . .
And he lay still. Blood swam across his sight.
Then with a groan:
"No luck ever! Well, I must die alone."

Occasional rifles cracked. A cloud that shone,
Gold-rimmed, blackened the sun and then was gone. . . .
The sun still smiled. The grass sang in its play.
Someone whistled: "Over the hills and far away."
Gates watched silently the swift, swift sun
Burning his life before it was begun. . . .

Suddenly he heard Corporal Timmins' voice:
"Now then,
'Urry up with that tea."
"Hi Ginger!" "Bill!" His men!
Timmins and Jones and Wilkinson (the 'bard'),
And Hughes and Simpson. It was hard
Not to see them: Wilkinson, stubby, grim,
With his "No, sir," "Yes, sir," and the slim

Simpson: " Indeed, sir ?" (while it seemed he
winked
Because his smiling left eye always blinked)
And Corporal Timmins, straight and blonde
and wise,
With his quiet-scanning, level, hazel eyes;
And all the others . . . tunics that didn't fit . . .
A dozen different sorts of eyes. O it
Was hard to lie there ! Yet he must. But no:
" I've got to die. I'll get to them. I'll go."

Inch by inch he fought, breathless and mute,
Dragging his carcase like a famished brute. . . .
His head was hammering, and his eyes were dim;
A bloody sweat seemed to ooze out of him
And freeze along his spine. . . . Then he'd lie
still
Before another effort of his will
Took him one nearer yard.

* * * * *

The parapet was reached.
He could not rise to it. A lookout screeched:
" Mr. Gates !"
Three figures in one breath
Leaped up. Two figures fell in toppling death;
And Gates was lifted in. " Who's hit ?" said he.
" Timmins and Jones." " Why did they that
for me ?—

I'm gone already!" Gently they laid him prone
And silently watched.
He twitched. They heard him moan
"Why for me?" His eyes roamed round, and
none replied.
"I see it was alone I should have died."
They shook their heads. Then, "Is the doctor
here?"
"He's coming, sir; he's hurryin', no fear."
"No good. . . .
Lift me." They lifted him.
He smiled and held his arms out to the dim,
And in a moment passed beyond their ken,
Hearing him whisper, "O my men, my men!"

In Hospital, London,
Autumn, 1915.

IV.—BEHIND THE LINES: NIGHT, FRANCE

At the cross-roads I halt
And stand stock-still. . . .
The linked and flickering constellations climb
Slowly the spread black heaven's immensity.

The wind wanders like a thought at fault.

Within the close-shuttered cottage nigh
I hear—while its fearful, ag'd master sleeps like the dead—
A slow clock chime
With solemn thrill
The most sombre hour of time,
And see stand in the cottage's garden chill
The two white crosses, one at each grave's head. . . .

O France, France, France! I loved you, love you still;
But, Oh! why took you not my life instead?

V.—AT THE WARS

Now that I am ta'en away,
And may not see another day,
What is it to my eye appears ?
What sound rings in my stricken ears ?
Not even the voice of any friend
Or eyes beloved-world-without-end,
But scenes and sounds of the countryside
In far England across the tide:
An upland field when Spring's begun,
Mellow beneath the evening sun. . . .
A circle of loose and lichened wall
Over which seven red pines fall. . . .
An orchard of wizen blossoming trees
Wherein the nesting chaffinches
Begin again the self-same song
All the late April day-time long. . . .
Paths that lead a shelving course
Between the chalk scarp and the gorse
By English downs; and, O ! too well
I hear the hidden, clanking bell

Of wandering sheep . . . I see the brown
Twilight of the huge empty down. . . .
Soon blotted out ! for now a lane
Glitters with warmth of May-time rain,
And on a shooting briar I see
A yellow bird who sings to me.

O yellow-hammer, once I heard
Thy yaffle when no other bird
Could to my sunk heart comfort bring;
But now I would not have thee sing,
So sharp thy note is with the pain
Of England I may not see again !
Yet sing thy song: there answereth
Deep in me a voice which saith:
" *The gorse upon the twilit down,*
The English loam so sunset brown,
The bowed pines and the sheep-bells' clamour,
The wet, lit lane and the yellow-hammer,
The orchard and the chaffinch song,
Only to the Brave belong.
And he shall lose their joy for aye
If their price he cannot pay,
Who shall find them dearer far
Enriched by blood after long War."

VI.—OUT OF TRENCHES: THE BARN, TWILIGHT

In the raftered barn we lie,
Sprawl, scrawl postcards, laugh and speak—
Just mere men a trifle weary,
Worn in heart, a trifle weak:
Because alway
At close of day
Thought steals to England far away. . . .
"Alf!" "O ay."
"Gi' us a tune, mate." "Well, wot say?"
"Swipe 'The Policeman's 'Oliday' . . ."
"*Tiddle-iddle-um-tum,*
Tum-TUM."

Sprawling on my aching back,
Think I nought; but I am glad—
Dear, rare lads of pick and pack!
Aie me too! I'm sad . . . I'm sad:
Some must die
(Maybe I):
O pray it take them suddenly!

" Bill !" " Wot ho !"
" Concertina: let it go—
' If you were the only girl.' " " Cheero !"
" *If you were the Only Girl.*"

Damn. ' Abide with Me . . .' Not now !—
Well . . . if you must: just your way.
It racks me till the tears nigh flow.
The tune see-saws. I turn, I pray
Behind my hand,
Shaken, unmanned,
In groans that God may understand:
Miracle !
" Let, let them all survive this hell."
Hear ' Trumpeter, what are you sound-
ing ?' swell.
(My God ! I guess indeed too well:
The broken heart, eyes front, proud knell !)
Grant but mine sound with their farewell.
" *It's the Last Post I'm sounding.*"

VII.—BATTERY MOVING UP TO A NEW POSITION FROM REST CAMP: DAWN

Not a sign of life we rouse
In any square close-shuttered house
That flanks the road we amble down
Toward far trenches through the town.

The dark, snow-slushy, empty street. . . .
Tingle of frost in brow and feet. . . .
Horse-breath goes dimly up like smoke.
No sound but the smacking stroke

Of a sergeant flings each arm
Out and across to keep him warm,
And the sudden splashing crack
Of ice-pools broken by our track.

More dark houses, yet no sign
Of life. . . . An axle's creak and whine. . . .
The splash of hooves, the strain of trace. . . .
Clatter: we cross the market place.

Deep quiet again, and on we lurch
Under the shadow of a church:
Its tower ascends, fog-wreathed and grim;
Within its aisles a light burns dim. . . .

When, marvellous! from overhead,
Like abrupt speech of one deemed dead,
Speech-moved by some Superior Will,
A bell tolls thrice and then is still.

And suddenly I know that now
The priest within, with shining brow,
Lifts high the small round of the Host.
The server's tingling bell is lost

In clash of the greater overhead.
Peace like a wave descends, is spread,
While watch the peasants' reverent eyes. . . .

The bell's boom trembles, hangs, and dies.

O people who bow down to see
The Miracle of Calvary,
The bitter and the glorious,
Bow down, bow down and pray for us.

Once more our anguished way we take
Toward our Golgotha, to make
For all our lovers sacrifice.

Again the troubled bell tolls thrice.

And slowly, slowly, lifted up
Dazzles the overflowing cup.

O worshipping, fond multitude,
Remember us too, and our blood.

Turn hearts to us as we go by,
Salute those about to die,
Plead for them, the deep bell toll:
Their sacrifice must soon be whole.

Entreat you for such hearts as break
With the premonitory ache
Of bodies, whose feet, hands, and side,
Must soon be torn, pierced, crucified.

Sue for them and all of us
Who the world over suffer thus,
Who have scarce time for prayer indeed,
Who only march and die and bleed.

* * * * *

The town is left, the road leads on,
Bluely glaring in the sun,
Toward where in the sunrise gate
Death, honour, and fierce battle wait.

VIII.—EVE OF ASSAULT: INFANTRY GOING DOWN TO TRENCHES

Downward slopes the wild red sun.
We lie around a waiting gun;
Soon we shall load and fire and load.
But, hark! a sound beats down the road.

"'Ello! wot's up?" "Let's 'ave a look!"
"Come on, Ginger, drop that book!"
"Wot an 'ell of bloody noise!"
"It's the Yorks and Lancs, meboys!"

So we crowd: hear, watch them come—
One man drubbing on a drum,
A crazy, high mouth-organ blowing,
Tin cans rattling, cat-calls, crowing. . . .

And above their rhythmic feet
A whirl of shrilling loud and sweet,
Round mouths whistling in unison;
Shouts: "'O's goin' to out the 'Un?"

" Back us up, mates !" " Gawd, we will !"
" 'Eave them shells at Kaiser Bill !"
" Art from Lancashire, melad ?"
" Gi' 'en a cheer, boys; make 'en glad."

" 'Ip 'urrah !" " Give Fritz the chuck."
" Good ol' bloody Yorks !" " Good-luck !"
" Cheer !"

I cannot cheer or speak
Lest my voice, my heart must break.

IX.—THE ASSAULT

Note.—(1) "Zero" is the hour agreed upon by the Staff when the infantry are to go over the parapet and advance to the assault. (2) Guns are said to "lift" when, after pounding the front line of the enemy, they lengthen their range and set up a barrier of fire behind his front line to prevent supports moving up. Our infantry then advance.

The beating of the guns grows louder.
"*Not long, boys, now.*"
My heart burns whiter, fearfuller, prouder.
Hurricanes grow
As guns redouble their fire.
Through the shaken periscope peeping,
I glimpse their wire:
Black earth, fountains of earth rise, leaping,
Spouting like shocks of meeting waves.
Death's fountains are playing.
Shells like shrieking birds rush over;
Crash and din rises higher.
A stream of lead raves
Over us from the left . . . (we safe under cover!)
Crash! Reverberation! Crash!
Acrid smoke billowing. Flash upon flash.

Black smoke drifting. The German line
Vanishes in confusion, smoke. Cries, and cry
Of our men, " *Gah, yer swine!*
Ye're for it," die
In a hurricane of shell.

One cry:
" *We're comin' soon! look out!*"
There is opened hell
Over there; fragments fly,
Rifles and bits of men whirled at the sky:
Dust, smoke, thunder! A sudden bout
Of machine guns chattering . . .
And redoubled battering,
As if in fury at their daring! . . .

No good staring.

Time soon now . . . home . . . house on a sunny
hill . . .
Gone like a flickered page:
Time soon now . . . zero . . . will engage. . . .

A sudden thrill—
" Fix bayonets!"
Gods! we have our fill
Of fear, hysteria, exultation, rage,
Rage to kill.

My heart burns hot, whiter and whiter,
Contracts tighter and tighter,
Until I stifle with the will
Long forged, now used
(Though utterly strained)—
O pounding heart,
Baffled, confused,
Heart panged, head singing, dizzily pained—
To do my part.

Blindness a moment. Sick.
There the men are!
Bayonets ready: click!
Time goes quick;
A stumbled prayer . . . somehow a blazing star
In a blue night . . . where?
Again prayer.
The tongue trips. Start:
How's time? Soon now. Two minutes or less.
The gun's fury mounting higher . . .
Their utmost. I lift a silent hand. Unseen
I bless
Those hearts will follow me.
And beautifully,
Now beautifully my will grips.
Soul calm and round and filmed and white!

A shout: "Men, no such order as retire."

I nod.
The whistle's 'twixt my lips . . .
I catch
A wan, worn smile at me.
Dear men!
The pale wrist-watch . . .
The quiet hand ticks on amid the din.
The guns again
Rise to a last fury, to a rage, a lust:
Kill! Pound! Kill! Pound! Pound!
Now comes the thrust!
My part . . . dizziness . . . will . . . but trust
These men. The great guns rise;
Their fury seems to burst the earth and skies!

They lift.

Gather, heart, all thoughts that drift;
Be steel, soul,
Compress thyself
Into a round, bright whole.
I cannot speak.

Time. Time!

I hear my whistle shriek,
Between teeth set;
I fling an arm up,
Scramble up the grime
Over the parapet!

I'm up. Go on.
Something meets us.
Head down into the storm that greets us.
A wail.
Lights. Blurr.
Gone.
On, on. Leăd. Leăd. Hail.
Spatter. Whirr! Whirr!
"*Toward that patch of brown;*
Direction left." Bullets a stream.
Devouring thought crying in a dream.
Men, crumpled, going down. . . .
Go on. Go.
Deafness. Numbness. The loudening tornado.
Bullets. Mud. Stumbling and skating.
My voice's strangled shout:
"*Steady pace, boys!*"
The still light: gladness.
"*Look, sir. Look out!*"
Ha! ha! Bunched figures waiting.
Revolver levelled quick!
Flick! Flick!
Red as blood.
Germans. Germans.
Good! O good!
Cool madness.

X.—THE LAST MORNING

Come now, O Death,
While I am proud,
While joy and awe are breath,
And heart beats loud!

While all around me stand
Men that I love,
The wind blares aloud, the grand
Sun wheels above.

Naked I stand to-day
Before my doom,
Welcome what comes my way,
Whatever come.

What is there more to ask
Than that I have?—
Companions, love, a task,
And a deep grave!

Come then, Eternity,
If thou my lot;
Having been thus, I cannot be
As if I had not.

Naked I wait my doom!
Earth enough shroud!
Death, in thy narrow room
Man can lie proud!

XI.—FULFILMENT

Was there love once ? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once ? grief yet is mine.
Other loves I have, men rough, but men who stir
More grief, more joy, than love of thee and thine.

Faces cheerful, full of whimsical mirth,
Lined by the wind, burned by the sun;
Bodies enraptured by the abounding earth,
As whose children we are brethren: one.

And any moment may descend hot death
To shatter limbs ! pulp, tear, blast
Beloved soldiers who love rough life and breath
Not less for dying faithful to the last.

O the fading eyes, the grimed face turned bony,
Oped mouth gushing, fallen head,
Lessening pressure of a hand shrunk, clammed,
and stony !
O sudden spasm, release of the dead !

Was there love once ? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once ? grief yet is mine.
O loved, living, dying, heroic soldier,
All, all, my joy, my grief, my love, are thine !

THE DEAD

I.—THE BURIAL IN FLANDERS

(H. S. G., Ypres, 1916)

Through the light rain I think I see them going,
Through the light rain under the muffled skies;
Across the fields a stealthy wet wind wanders,
The mist bedews their tunics, dizzies their brains.

Shoulder-high, khaki shoulder by shoulder,
They bear my Boy upon his last journey.
Night is closing. The wind sighs, ebbs, and falters. . . .
They totter dreaming, deem they see his face.

Even as Vikings of old their slaughtered leader
Upon their shoulders, so now bear they on
All that remains of Boy, my friend, their leader,
An officer who died for them under the dawn.

O that I were there that I might carry,
Might share that bitter load in grief, in pride! . . .
I see upon bronze faces love, submission,
And a dumb sorrow for that cheerful Boy.

Now they arrive. The priest repeats the service.
The drifting rain obscures.
They are dispersed.
The dying sun streams out: a moment's radiance;
The still, wet, glistening grave; the trod sward
steaming.

* * * * *

Sudden great guns startle, echoing on the silence.
Thunder. Thunder.
HE HAS FALLEN IN BATTLE.
(O Boy! Boy!)
Lessening now. The rain
Patters anew. Far guns rumble and shudder
And night descends upon the desolate plain.

LAWFORD,
September, 1916.

II.—BOY

In a far field, away from England, lies
A Boy I friended with a care like love;
All day the wide earth aches, the cold wind cries,
The melancholy clouds drive on above.

There, separate from him by a little span,
Two eagle cousins, generous, reckless, free,
Two Grenfells, lie, and my Boy is made man,
One with these elder knights of chivalry.

Boy, who expected not this dreadful day,
Yet leaped, a soldier, at the sudden call,
Drank as your fathers, deeper though than they,
The soldier's cup of anguish, blood, and gall,

Not now as friend, but as a soldier, I
Salute you fallen; for the Soldier's name
Our greatest honour is, if worthily
These wayward hearts assume and bear the same:

The Soldier's is a name none recognize,
Saving his fellows. Deeds are all his flower.
He lives, he toils, he suffers, and he dies,
And if not all in vain this is his dower:

The Soldier is the Martyr of a nation,
Expresses but is subject to its will;
His is the Pride ennobles Resignation,
As his the rebel Spirit-to-fulfil.

Anonymous, he takes his country's name,
Becomes its blindest vassal—though its lord
By force of arms; its shame is called his shame,
As its the glory gathered by his sword.

Lonely he is: he has nor friend nor lover,
Sith in his body he is dedicate. . . .
His comrades only share his life, or offer
Their further deeds to one more heart oblate.

Living, he's made an 'Argument Beyond'
For others' peace; but when hot wars have birth,
For all his brothers' safety becomes bond
To Fate or Whatsoever sways this Earth.

Dying, his mangled body, to inter it,
He doth bequeath him into comrade hands;
His soul he renders to some Captain Spirit
That knows, admires, pities, and understands!

All this you knew by that which doth reside
Deeper than learning; by apprehension
Of ancient, dark, and melancholy pride
You were a Soldier true, and died as one.

All day the cold wind cries, the clouds unroll;
But to the cloud and wind I cry, " Be still !"
What need of comfort has the heroic soul ?
What soldier finds a soldier's grave is chill ?

LAWFORD,
September, 1916.

III.—PLAINT OF FRIENDSHIP BY DEATH BROKEN

(R. P., Loos, 1915)

God, if Thou livest, Thine eye on me bend,
And stay my grief and bring my pain to end:
Pain for my lost, the deepest, rarest friend
Man ever had, whence groweth this despair.

I had a friend: but, O! he is now dead;
I had a vision: for which he has bled:
I had happiness: but it is fled.
God help me now, for I must needs despair.

His eyes were dark and sad, yet never sad;
In them moved sombre figures sable-clad;
They were the deepest eyes man ever had,
They were my solemn joy—*now my despair.*

In my perpetual night they on me look,
Reading me slowly; and I cannot brook
Their silent beauty, for nor crack nor nook
Can cover me but they shall find me there.

His face was straight, his mouth was wide yet
trim;
His hair was tangled black, and through its dim
Softness his perplexed hand would writhe and
swim—
Hands that were small on arms strong-knit
yet spare.

He stood no taller than our common span,
Swam but nor farther leaped nor faster ran;
I know him spirit now, who seemed a man.
God help me now, for I must needs despair.

His voice was low and clear, yet it could rise
And beat in indignation at the skies;
Then no man dared to meet his fire-filled eyes,
And even I, his own friend, did not dare.

With humorous wistfulness he spoke to us,
Yet there was something more mysterious,
Beyond his words or silence, glorious:
I know not what, but we could feel it there.

I mind now how we sat one winter night
While past his open window raced the bright
Snow-torrent golden in the hot firelight. . . .
I see him smiling at the streamered air.

I watched him to the open window go,
And lean long smiling, whispering to the snow,
Play with his hands amid the fiery flow
And when he turned it flamed amid his hair.

Without arose a sudden bell's huge clang
Until a thousand bells in answer rang
And midnight Oxford hummed and reeled and sang
Under the whitening fury of the air.

His figure standing in the fiery room . . .
Behind him the snow seething through the gloom . . .
The great bells shaking, thundering out their doom . . .
Soft Fiery Snow and Night his being were.

Yet he could be simply glad and take his choice,
Walking spring woods, mimicking each bird voice;
When he was glad we learned how to rejoice:
If the birds sing, 'tis to my spite they dare.

All women loved him, yet his mother won
His tenderness alone, for Moon and Sun
And Rain were for him sister, brother, lovèd one,
And in their life he took an equal share.

Strength he had, too; strength of unrusted will
Buttressed his natural charity, and ill
Fared it with him who sought his good to kill:
He was its Prince and Champion anywhere.

Yet he had weakness, for he burned too fast;
And his unrecked-of body at the last
He in impatience on the bayonets cast,
Body whose spirit had outsoared them there.

I had a friend, but, O! he is now dead.
Fate would not let me follow where he led.
In him I had happiness. But he is dead.
God help me now, for I must needs despair.

God, if Thou livest, and indeed didst send
Thine only Son to be to all a Friend,
Bid His dark, pitying eyes upon me bend,
And His hand heal, or *I must needs despair.*

In Hospital,
Autumn, 1915.

IV.—BY THE WOOD

How still the day is, and the air how bright!
A thrush sings and is silent in the wood;
The hillside sleeps dizzy with heat and light;
A rhythmic murmur fills the quietude;
A woodpecker prolongs his leisured flight,
Rising and falling on the solitude.

But there are those who far from yon wood lie,
Buried within the trench where all were found.
A weight of mould oppresses every eye,
Within that cabin close their limbs are bound,
And there they rot amid the long profound,
Disastrous silence of grey earth and sky.

These once, too, rested where now rests but one,
Who scarce can lift his panged and heavy head,
Who drinks in grief the hot light of the sun,
Whose eyes watch dully the green branches spread,
Who feels his currents ever slowlier run,
Whose lips repeat a silent '. . . Dead! all dead!'

O youths to come shall drink air warm and
bright,
Shall hear the bird cry in the sunny wood,
All my Young England fell to-day in fight:
That bird, that wood, was ransomed by our
blood!

I pray you when the drum rolls let your mood
Be worthy of our deaths and your delight.

1916.

THE AFTERMATH

I.—AT THE EBB

Alone upon the monotonous ocean's verge
I take my stand, and view with heavy eye
The grey wave rise. I hear its sullen surge,
Its bubbling rush and sudden downward sigh. . . .

My friends are dead . . . there fades from me the light
Of her warm face I loved; upon me stare
In the dull noon or deadest hour of night
The smiling lips and chill eyes of Despair.

A light wind blows. . . . I hear the low wave steal
In and collapse like a despondent breath.
My life has ebbed: I neither see nor feel:
I am suspended between life and death.

Again the wave caves in. O, I am worn
Smoother than any pebble on the beach!
I would dissolve to that whence I was born,
Or alway bide beyond the long wave's reach.

O Will, thou only strengthener of man's heart
When all is gone—love and the love of friends,
When even Earth's comfort has become a part
Of that futility nor breaks nor mends:

Strengthen me now against these utmost wrongs;
Stay my wrecked spirit within thy control,
That men may find some fury in my songs
Which, like strong wine, shall fortify the soul.

Beneath Gold Cap,
June, 1916.

II.—ALONE

The grey wind and the grey sea
Tossing under the long grey sky. . . .
My heart is lonelier than the wind;
My heart is emptier than the sky,
And beats more heavily
Than the cold surge beneath the gull,
Wheeling with his reiterant cry
Of loneliness. . . . All, all is lone:
Alone! . . .
And so am I.

III.—THANKSGIVING

Amazement fills my heart to-night,
Amaze and awful fears;
I am a ship that sees no light,
But blindly onward steers.

Flung toward heaven's toppling rage,
Sunk between steep and steep,
A lost and wondrous fight I wage
With the embattled deep.

I neither know nor care at length
Where drives the storm about;
Only I summon all my strength
And swear to ride it out.

Yet give I thanks; despite these wars,
My ship—though blindly blown,
Long lost to sun or moon or stars—
Still stands up alone.
I need no trust in borrowed spars;
My strength is yet my own.

IV.—ANNIHILATED

Upon the sweltering sea's enormous round,
Asmoke, adazzle, brown and brown and gold,
A hushed light falls. . . .
Then clouds without a sound
Darken the sea within their curtain's fold.

The sombre clouds through which the sick sun
climbs
Smoke slowly on. Below there is no breath.
The long black beach turns livid.
The sea chimes.
I taste the fulness of my spirit's death.

V.—SHUT OF NIGHT

The sea darkens. Waves roar and rush.
The wind rises. The last birds haste.
One star over eve's bitter flush
Spills on the spouting waste.

Loud and louder the darkened sea.
The wind shrills on a monotone.
Sky and deep, wrecked confusedly,
Travail and cry as one.

Long I look on the deepening sky,
The chill star, the forlorn sea breaking;
For what does my spirit cry ?
For what is my heart so aching ?

Is it home ? but I have no home.
Is it tears ? but I no more weep.
Is it love ? love went by dumb.
Is it sleep ? but I would not sleep.

Must I fare, then, in fear and fever
On a journey become thrice far—
Whose sun has gone down for ever,
Whose night brings no guiding star ?

The wind roars, and an ashen beam
Waving up shrinks away in haste.
The waves crash. The star's trickling gleam
Travels the warring waste.

I look up. In the windy height
The lone orb, serene and afar,
Shakes with excess of her light. . . .

Beauty, be thou my star !

VI.—THE FULL HEART

Alone on the shore in the pause of the night-time
I stand and I hear the long wind blow light;
I view the constellations quietly, quietly burning;
I hear the wave fall in the hush of the night.

Long after I am dead, ended this bitter journey,
Many another whose heart holds no light
Shall your solemn sweetness, hush, awe, and comfort,
O my companions, Wind, Waters, Stars, and Night.

Near Gold Cap,
1916.

VII.—SONNET: OUR DEAD

They have not gone from us. O no! they are
The inmost essence of each thing that is
Perfect for us; they flame in every star;
The trees are emerald with their presences.
They are not gone from us; they do not roam
The flaw and turmoil of the lower deep,
But have now made the whole wide world their
home,
And in its loveliness themselves they steep.

They fail not ever; theirs is the diurn
Splendour of sunny hill and forest grave;
In every rainbow's glittering drop they burn;
They dazzle in the massed clouds' architrave;
They chant on every wind, and they return
In the long roll of any deep blue wave.

VIII.—DELIVERANCE

Out of the Night! out of the Night I come:
Free at last: the whole world is my home:
I have lost self: I look not on myself again,
But if I do I see a man among men.

Out of the Night! out of the Night, O Flesh:
Soul I know not from Body within thy mesh:
Accepting all that is, I cannot divide the same:
I accept the smoke because I accept the flame.

Out of the Night! out of the Night, O Friends:
O all my dead, think ye our friendship ends?
Harold, Kenneth, Dick, many hearts that were
true,
While I breathe breath, I am breathing you.

Out of the Night! out of the Night, O Power:
Many a fight to be won, many an awful hour;
Many an hour to wish death ere I go to death,
Many an hour to bless breath ere I cease from
breath.

Out of the Night! out of the Night, O Soul:
Give thanks to the Night: Night and Day are the Whole.
I count mere life-breath nothing now I know Life's worth
Lies all in spending! that known, love Life and Earth.

BOOK II
A FAUN'S HOLIDAY

To my Brother
PHILIP NICHOLS

'O Fantaisie, emporte-moi sur tes ailes pour désennuyer ma tristesse!'

FLAUBERT.

Roughly planned in Spring, 1914, at Oxford. "Midday in Arcadia" composed July, 1914; "Catch for Spring" adapted from version of 1912 during the same month: both at Grayshott. Taken up again in February, 1916, continued at the Hut, Bray, and, after being frequently interrupted, finished on February 18, 1917, at Ilsington.

The author intends the "hulli" and the "lulli" of the Faun's call in 'Faun's Rally' to be pronounced as if they rhymed with such a word as "fully."

A FAUN'S HOLIDAY

I

Of the Faun's awakening.

HARK! a sound. Is it I sleep?
Wake I? or do my senses keep
Commune yet with thoughtful night
And dream they feel, not see, the light
That, with a chord as if a lyre
Were upward swept by tongues of fire,
Spreads in all-seeing majesty
Over crag, dale, curved shore, and sea?

If this be sleep, I do not sleep.
I hear the little woodnote weep
Of a shy, darkling bird which cries
In a sweet-fluted, sharp surprise
At glimpse of me, the faun-beast, sleeping
Nigh under her. My crook'd leg, sweeping
Some dream away, perhaps, awoke her,
For dew shook from a bough doth soak her.

And all elsewhere how still it is!—
The mist beyond the precipice

Smokes gently up. The bushes hang
Over the gulph 'cross which I sprang
Last midnight,—though the unicorn,
Who with clanged hooves and lowered horn
Raging pursued, now hidden lies
Amid the cragside dewberries
And sweats his frosty flanks in sleep,
Dreaming he views again my leap
Thrice hazardous. . . .
The silver chasm
Sighs, and many a blithe phantasm
Turns in the sunlight's quivering ray.
I couch in peace. Thoughts fond and gay
Feed on my sense of maiden hours
And earth refreshed by suns and showers
Of nightly dew and heavy quiet.—
Though last night rang with dinning riot:
Dionysos in headlong mood
Ranged through the labyrinthine wood;
Fleet maids sped, yelping, on with him,
Brandishing a torn heifer's limb,
Dissonant cymbals, or black bowl
Of wine and blood; a wolfish howl
Fled ululant with them. . . .
Now there is
Depth, the white mist, the great sun, peace.

Too numb such sunshine!—Let me hence
Out of the solemn imminence

Of the Faun's Descent from the Mountain.

Of yon chill spire whose shadow creeps
Toward me from the stagnant deeps
Of the ravine. For now I will
Descend and take again my fill
Of fancy wild and musing joy,
Such as each dawn brings to alloy
The long affliction of a spirit
Who a complete world did inherit,
And feels it crumbling.
I will down
Whither twin bluffs of sheer stone frown
Over sunk seas of billowing pine
Terrace on terrace, line on line,
Below whose heads the broad downs slope
Away, away till senses grope
At something rather felt than seen:
The sea,—not wave-tops, but a sheen
Under the dazed and distant sky. . . .
Curled on a cliff-top let me lie.
(For yonder, hap, a breeze is blowing,
And the sun's first gleam is showing
Under far wreckage: since our height
Inherits day while yet their light
Quakes gold under the low clouds' rift.)
Down, then! Miraculously swift
These limbs the gods have given me! . .
Couched mid the gorse, anon I see,
Opposing this my bluff, the face
Of the sheer rock, and 'long it trace

A sill scarce ample for a goat,
Yet midway in the ledge-path note
A cave's mouth, which thick creepers hide
Fallen in a silvery tide
From a slant crevice overhead.
And, lo! the creeper stirs, is shed—
And all falls quiet.
Till at last
Issues a voice deep, young and vast:

II

Centaur. Up! the ag'd centaurs lie yet sleeping,
While crouch I palled of this cavern lair
And watch the stretched sea-eagle sweeping
Down the grey-blue drizzling air.
The sea-nymphs, too, will now be waking,
If sickle-eyed they have not played
Across the moonlight sets me aching,
Longing and slinking, half afraid,
Down the feathery, tawny sand
On sighing tread
Deep into banks of glistering shell,
To halt in dread
Lest my hoof-scrunch break the spell
Of the syren-chants that swell
From the dim shoals toward the land.

But this morn the breeze is blowing
Freshly: I hear lightly flowing

From the bending giant beam
Bars the forehead of our door
The golden raindrops in a stream
Pattering on the steamy floor.

Faun. It is the Centaur's voice I hear!
Young and lusty, deep and clear:
And the Panisks at his voice
In their fastnesses rejoice,
Emerging from the creviced crag
Or cave beneath the mountain's jag,
Merry, shaggy, light of hoof,
To run along the narrow roof,
And upon the shelvèd height
Dance before the swimming light.

THE CENTAUR'S MORNING SONG (*continued*).

Centaur. And I see upon the ledge,
Astir over the hanging edge,
A russet briar cold with dew
And beyond, forlornly pent
In a grey cloud's gliding rent,
A pure pool of the brightest blue:
So near it seems I've but to cast
A flint out on the forward vast
To mark it flashing blithely through!

And now at last!
At last
The great Sun
The Sudden One,

Stamps upon the cloudy floor;
The heavens are split, and through the floor
Heaven's golden treasures tumbling pour. . . .
And the Sun himself, divine,
Doth descend
In such a bursting blaze of shine
That his glorious hair is shook
Over the wide world's craggiest end!
And, even I, I dare not look.

* * * * *

I will shout! I will ramp!
Just three bounds: then out and stamp
Where the air like water is
Eddying up over the precipice;—
Wind with an edge to it, sea-damp,
Blowing from the canyon's race
Where the dripping sea-wind heaves
Through a tunnel of the rocks
Sea-water up in thunderous sheaves
Against the precipitous water-rapids,
To whip from off th' high-hurtled shocks
Bursts of mist which soak the leaves
Of each scented bush that cleaves
To the cliffs. Till Fauns and Lapiths
Dance in the sun-bewildered brakes,
Till even flushed Silenus wakes,
And—with a short deep-throated troll
To the wind and to the wine,

Both delirious, both divine!—
Starts, as he drains the tilted bowl,
At din, to rolling uproar grown,
Of rocks dislodged and bounding down,
With splinter of pines and flint-shocked flashes,
From the ridge whereon we dance
In a loud exuberance
Of rattling hoofs whose echoes drown
The squealing joy or reedy pining
Of Pan's pipe, where Pan reclining
Plays in the clouded mountain's crown!

III

The Faun hails the Centaur.

Faun. It is the Centaur's voice I hear.
The creeper tresses toss with fear,
Then part before a pow'rful hand.
See, see, O see the Centaur stand
With rugged head erect and proud,
Whose rounded mouth yet chants aloud
The Joy of Mind fulfilled in Force:
Glory of Man, glory of Horse.

Hail thou, the sov'reign of the hill!
Hail thou, upon whose locks distil
Fresh dews when mid majestic night
Thou pacest, hid, along the height.
Thine are the solitudes of snow
Between bare peaks, thy hooves also

Are heard within the dusk defile
Where Titans of a sunless while
Fashioned huge sphinxes in whose eyes
The Kite now skulks or, girding, cries.
Thine, too, the sole and sinking pine
Burned by the sunset—ay, and thine
The ledges whence a sudden sift
Of snow sighs downward, thine the swift
Uproar of avalanche and all
The mountain echoes. To thee call,
When the snow melts and there are seen
Crocuses blazing mid the green
Of the dewed grass, the Sylvan folk:
The Dryads from the leafless oak
Or budded elder, that at length
Thou mayst release them by the strength
Of thy tough fingers; 'tis on thee
The nymphs cry should the runnels be
Exhausted of the midsummer sun,
Sith, stamping, thou canst make to run
The hoarded waters of the wold.
And among men thou art of old
Thought's emblem: for to thee belong
All gifts of deep, wise, epic song.
Hail, then, whom Earth and mankind hails.
And Ocean, whose high-spouting whales
And dripping serpents, that arise
Swinging their gold crests to the skies
To drink in all thy bold descant

Hail, though they cannot view thee chant,
As I who now behold in sooth
Thy lighted eyes and singing mouth.

Of the Centaur's Beauty.

O grape-hung locks! glorious face,
Capacious frame, sinewy grace
Of arm that lifts a skully lyre
Whose dithyramb whirls ever higher!
Deep breast-bone, belly, curvèd thews—
Such as the tussling oak doth use
Upon the crumbled scarp to grip—
Striking from trunk down through the hip
Into the stallion's massive shoulders
Glossy as moonlit ice-bound boulders!
Stiff, stalwart forelegs, heavy hoof
Yet fleeter far on heights aloof
Than ev'n such doubled hares as race
Blue 'thwart dim fells, or, speck in space,
Osprey, gale-swept across the tides!
Thy man's trunk glisters; on thy sides
A soft and silver shagginess,
Inviting slim hands to caress,
Hangs dewy——

Centaur. Faun, Faun, art thou near?
Faun. Behold me stand, proud Centaur, here
Upon the bluff where 'neath me lies
The sunned pool of the precipice.

Of the Centaur's Ardour.

Centaur. Faun, in my veins the blood 'gins race,
The new sun sweats upon my face,
Dazzles my pupils, golden swims
Over my flushed and fervid limbs.
I feel in me my spirit rise
Griffon-like flogging up tall skies.
Now is the Morning of the World,
And through my heart a flood is hurled
Of onerous joyance, of desire
To clutch the sun and spill its fire
Down heaven's blue bulwarks! to snatch life
And drain its lusty full in strife
Of all my body with the bent
Wrestle of every element:
Close with the whirlwind, front the tide
And turn its moony press aside.

But in the world I cannot find
A match in strength, a foe in mind. . . .
At dawn, at eve the waters burn;
All night the constellations turn
Round the dark pole, and none knows why. . .
None seeks to know save only I
And thou, O Faun. We are alone. . . .
Yet sometimes, when the wind is gone
And all below shines sunned and still,
I feel depart from me the will
Merely to know, to know and wait:
I would do more: I would create.

Though what I know not; but I would
Spend this my mind and hardihood.
Yet find no means save physic force:—
Sing as a man, stride as a horse.
Then stride I ? Swift I overcome
The fleetest. Sing I ? All are dumb.
Natheless my heart demands in grief
Ardour, endurance and relief;
Asks, but receives not.

Faun. Shall not I
Echo thy pain, whom Fates deny
Answer to thought,—as they to thee
The lust-of-action's fill ? But we
Accept too much, O Sire. 'Twere best,
Though idly, to fulfil our zest.

Of the Challenge.

Four leagues this canyon runs between
Us twain or ever there is seen
The arch of rock whose massy grace
Bridges yon gap of golden space.
Deignest thou, then, to race with me
From such tall eyries to the sea,
If even now I upward leap ?

Centaur. Leap then ! I catch thee e'er the steep
Subsides in woodland or in down

IV

And of the Manner of the Running.

Away! My rapping footfalls drown
All but the sobbing of the wind
Within my ears and loud behind
The thunder of the Centaur's hooves
Where, like a hailstorm, down he moves.
Past me the spun pines rock and hiss,
Behind my feet stones pelted whizz,
Hills rise before me, backward flow,
The bare downs, bright'ning, mount below. . . .
On. On. Down. Down. But, ah, no more!
My breath comes keener than the frore
Indraught of age-long mountain frost;
My head turns dizzy, feet are lost.
Yet scamper feet! A rock—a mound:
Rap! Rap! I soar it at a bound.
On. On. Down. Down. A sudden brook,
And now—in mid-air—lo! there look
Laughingly up at me the eyes
Of Hyads, and their fading cries
Ring in my ears. Can they have seen
The Centaur hurtle by between
Them and the clouds? The downs up-fly.
Now earth's bowl rocks and reels the sky
And through my chilly flaming tears
The molten sun swoops, bursts, and veers. . . .

Still rap my hoofs, though but the sound
Tells me they yet rocket the ground.
The uproar loudens more behind.
My crook'd legs cross, my eyes go blind.
I claw the sky: for, O ! I can
Scarce lurch. I feel the sudden fan
Of the great Centaur's galey breath
Upon my nape, and like chill death
His hand descends. But, ah ! he laughs
Even as Bacchus when he quaffs
In jest or taunt a double bowl.
The Faun falls. I, choking, reel, and, tripping, roll
Wildly aside. See ! as I fall
A rampant shape majestical
Storms vehement by, and, storming, swings
Hand across rushing lyre, which rings
To strains, like rolling breakers tossed
High o'er an adamantine coast,
In praise of elemental Mirth,
Strength, Beauty and the Golden Earth !

V

Of Downs beloved by Pan. Beyond the rocks, below the trees,
The great downs lie; nought but the breeze
Is heard upon them. All day long
The shadows of the great clouds throng
Across their sides: a noiseless rout.
Sometimes a peewit, blown about

By airy surge, cries a lone cry
Ere hurtled down the clarid sky;
Sometimes is heard a shepherd's voice
Shouting, and after it the noise
Of many-pattering crowded sheep
Herded within the gay dog's keep,
Who also, barking, shouts. Save these
Nought breaks the breezy silences
Of the green sun-swept, cloud-swept spaces. . . .

Such downs Pan loves, and ofttime places
His lonely altars on them.
I
One of such now behold. A high
Mound bears it, and its nakedness
Of festal fruit and fragrant dress
Hints 'tis new-built.
Up, then, and sound
A rally to the sacred ground:

FAUN'S RALLY.

Faun. Come ye, merry shepherds all,
Hulli-lulli-li-lo!
Listen to my piping call:
Hulli-li-lo!
Hasten to Pan's festival;
Leave your sheep.
Cannot Pan a shrewd watch keep
O'er his own?

Safe are they as pent in stall;
Safe are they, for Pan has thrown
Fear about them like a wall.

Wherefore, shepherds, hither run.

I have set my pipes to lip;
Now they cry despondingly
As mid shaken locks I dip.
Now shrill—as hark!—I lift them high
To swirl the tune about the sky!
Up and down and round the sky
Till want I further force to blow. . . .
Wherefore, shepherds, hither run,
Dance behind me as I skip;
Strike the tóssed támbours in únison,
Dance, dance and make to dance the sun
To your Hulli-li-lo!

Shepherds. Faun, I come. I hear. We hear—

Faun. This my Hulli-li-lo:
Now afar and now anear.

Shepherds. Never sped the midnight deer
Half so fast
'Fore Diana's star-ringed spear
As now haste we to appear
At thy Hulli-li-lo!

Faun. Joy, O shepherds, at the sound:
Hulli-lulli-li-lo!
Pan's new altar I have found:
Hulli-li-lo!
Cowslips prank its holy mound,
With ivy have I wreathed it round—
But not yet
Is the altar's dress complete
Till with flowers its horns are bound.

Shepherds. Faun, we hear, and from the brook
Flags are pulled; and now we hook
Honeysuckle high, low
Down to us with shepherd's crook;
Breathing floss,
Clematis twines, rushy stook,
Apple blossom, down is shook
At thy Hulli-li-lo!

Faun. Wreathe the pedestal anew;
Hulli-lulli-li-lo!
Scatter violets scattering dew;
Hulli-li-lo!
Honey that the brown bees brew
Pour, and rosy blossom strew;
Spill such wine
As in dim-bloomed clusters grew
On your father's father's vine.

Dance you now.
I my pipe cease—thus—to blow:
Dance you on.
Dance about the sacred mound,
Dance when every sound is gone. . . .
Now the timbrels softly, sprightly
Beat, and foot it gaily, lightly;
Tiptoe o'er the secret ground,
Dance the round.

Next, to the sole, trilling flute
And your own subdued laughter
Flutter all in throngs and mazes,
Chase in streams of ardent faces,
With bright eyes and oped mouth mute.
Now alone,
One by one,
Dance and dream, and dreaming float
Till the multitude drifts after,
And I wake a quicker note:
Clap your hands aloft and cry;
Surge in line tumultuously;
Cry, and with a whirl of voices
Fright the pigeons whickering by!
Praise the God of field and fold!
Shout until the hills have told,
By their sudden echoes flying,
Flying, crying, falling, dying,

That upon his name we call,
Who beside the river lying
Hears us keep his festival.

VI

The Faun enters the Valley.

Wearied of solitary hills,
On which the wannish sunlight spills,
And which the glooms of high clouds cross,
Clouds wandering ever at a loss
About th' immeasurable sky,
I will descend. And by-and-by
Glimpse beneath the shouldered down
A hamlet reeking golden-brown;
Creep through a willow copse to view
Under an orchard avenue,
A lithe girl in a sun-splashed smock
Calling her perchëd pigeon flock,
And as they coo and flutter over
Laughing and carolling of her lover.

Girl. '*Little pigeon, grave and fleet*'—
All the golden grain you'd eat,
Greedy! let the little bird
Pick some. Sweet, your cooing's heard;
You shall have this. There! Be bolder:
Light you now upon my shoulder. . . .
Cooroo? Cooroo in my ear?
Darling, yes, I hear, I hear:

From this hand, then, you shall pluck it.
Foolish love! your wings have struck it,
Spilt the grain the grass among.
—Flutter! Flutter!—where's my song?
'*Little pigeon, grave and fleet*'—
Too late now your wings you beat
By my face: look in the ground;
There, they say, all gold is found.

THE PIGEON SONG.

Little pigeon, grave and fleet,
  Eye-of-fire, sweet Snowy-wings,
Think you that you can discover
  On what great green down my lover
Lies by his sunny sheep and sings?

If you can, O go and greet
  Him from me; say: She is waiting. . . .
Not for him, O no! but, sweet,
  Say June's nigh and doves, remating,
Fill the dancing noontide heat
  With melodious debating.

Say the swift swoops from the beam;
  Soon the cuckoo must cease calling;
Kingcups flare beside the stream,
  That not glides now but runs brawling;
That wet roses are asteam
  In the sun and will be falling.

Say the chestnut sheds his bloom;
  Honey from straw hivings oozes;
There's a nightjar in the coombe;
  Venus nightly burns, and chooses
Most to blaze above my room;
  That the laggard 'tis that loses.

Say the nights are warm and free,
  And the great stars swarm above him;
But soon starless night must be.
  Yet if all these do not move him,
Tell, O tell—but not too plainly!—
  That I long for him and love him.

Little pigeon, grave and fleet,
  Fly you swiftly, tell him this;
And I'll give you grain so golden
  Midas' self has ne'er beholden
Aught so gold, and—yes!—a kiss.

Smiling at her eager voice,
I will grant the girl her choice,
Whispering to the pigeon: "Lo!
Yon's the way for you to go:
Over the willows, past the copse,
To where a sylph-like lime-tree tops
A lonely knoll; then on and on
Toward where yesternight there shone
A silver comet, scarce descried,
Against the fainting eventide."

VII

Of the Faun's whimseys.

Away then! crashing through the wood,
Prancing in a whimsey mood,
To yowl as a she-wolf does at dark
Until th' infuriate watch-dogs bark;
Or bid hushed tales of ghosts go round,
Of warnings heard, but nothing found,
By whistling at the village boor;
Or poke my rogue face round a door
And scare a huffy wife to fits,
Who swears, "'Tis Pan himself!" or, "It's
That grizzled sailor-man who slew
His mate 'twixt Bogs and Dead Man's Yew!"
Next through the dairy steal to slake
My thirst with cream, with honeycake
Cram my sweet maw; slip in the churn
A farm cat, that the tub may turn
And fright maid Molly. I will seek
Strawberries and stain chin, mouth and cheek
With nuzzling in their scarlet bowl;
Then in the goodman's bed I'll roll
Because he loves me not; I'll sing
Until the crowded rafters ring
The while about my ears I hang
Bobbed cherries. . . . Lastly I will clang

Among the clattering pots and pans,
Shout, cry " Oh help !" snatch up a man's
Cloak, and slip out.

The Pursuit.

Whoop ! Whoop ! They run:
The hare once spied, the hunt's begun !—
Goodman and goodman's wife, pert Polly,
Clown Colin, Wiggen and maid Molly,
Pant, crying, " Thief !" The while behind
Shrunk Dorcas hops, and fills the wind
With apish merriment, shrill malice,
And cries of—" Well run, Poll ! Run, Alice !
Run, child ! The master's cloak and all !
How sad the goodman's ta'en a fall !
Mistress down, too—he ! he ! what pity !
Run, Alice child, my bird, my pretty ;
Show 'em how nimble thou canst be,—
Ay, but the girl runs prettily.
Run, Hobbinol, thou gawky man !
Thou mayest kiss if catch thou can !
Odd's me ! and what's it all about ?
A thief ? That mischief Faun !"

A shout
Startles the pigeons from the croft:
" We've circled him !" " He's in the loft."
But as they, silent, crowd unto 't
I jump. For am not I a goat ?
From out the hayloft's height I leap
O'er their craned heads into the deep
Grass of the orchard. Thence I run

Across lush meadows. One by one
They fall behind. . . .
A scarecrow I
Now seek, and 'bout it carefully
Enwrap the newly pilfered cloak. . . .
Scarecrows are such poor crazy folk. . . .

VIII

The Faun hides. So to a thorny thicket dense
With rosy-coloured may-bloom, whence
I can hear a torrent rumble,
And, peering forth, behold it tumble
Cumbrously into a pool whose white
Tumult sears the giddied sight.
There, half dozed, silent, smile to hear
A babble of voices drawing near,
Spy many a boy and laughing lass
Racing hands-linked across the grass.

A CATCH FOR SPRING.

Boys and Girls. Now has the blue-eyed Spring
Sped dancing through the plain.
Girls weave a daisy chain;
Boys race beside the sedge;
Dust fills the blinding lane;
May lies upon the hedge:
All creatures love the spring!

The clouds laugh on, and would
Dance with us if they could;
The larks ascend and shrill;
A woodpecker fills the wood;
Jays laugh crossing the hill:
All creatures love the spring!

The lithe cloud-shadows chase
Over the whole earth's face,
And where winds ruffling veer
O'er wooded streams' dark ways
Mad fish upscudding steer:
All creatures love the spring!

Into the dairy cool
Run, girls, to drink thick cream!
Race, boys, to where the stream
Winds through a rumbling pool,
And your bright bodies fling
Into the foaming cool!
For we'll enjoy our spring!

IX

Of the Faun's Journey to the Sea.

Seaward my forest way I'll take,
And at a pool's lit quietude slake
My thirst, and feel a dull flame creep
Like the first flux of tidal sleep

Through all my limbs. Yet, when I sink
Sleepward, start wide-eyed up to drink
The sunned wood's wet deliciousness,
Touch flowers, and feel the sun's caress
About my locks, and wander on,
Or pause to smile up at the sun,
Guarding my eyes with glowing hand,
Or, leaned against a beech-trunk, stand
Watching between the branches' rift,
As they gently wave and lift
To the bland breeze softly blowing,
The noiseless clouds serenely going
Slowly to the hid, low sea
I can hear breathing slumberously.
Till from the woodland I emerge,
Greeted by a louder surge,
And from the bushy cliff-top spy
How the hollow bay doth lie
One quiver and murmur under the sun,
And how the lightsome wind-puffs run
Chasing each other crookedly,
Over the idly heaving sea.

Of the Sea-Horses.

Next I will turn my eyes, perhaps,
To where the languid waters lapse
Glittering over a sunburned rock
Round which the shrieking white gulls flock. . . .
Thus browsing in my solitude,
I may remember I've a feud

With the Sea-Horses, once who drave
Me from the sea-light of their cave.
Enough! and, crashing down, I come
To find them drowsing in their home. . . .
So creep I with a crooked stick
To where a blinding pool is quick
With green electric water-snakes.
Sprawling across a rock which bakes
I stir the molten till they boil
And up my hawthorn kick and coil;
Then scamper, rocketing, to the cave,
Hurl the stick in. Hark! how they rave,
And plunge up clattering, kicking, neighing,
Till Triton on his horn 'gins braying,
And each hasteneth to belabour
With hooves or tear with teeth his neighbour,
And from the cavern's blueness rush
Into the simmering beach's hush,
To stand, with heaving flanks, agaze
At the hot stones and still sea's blaze:
Then stampede, scattering high and wide
A hail of stones and glittering tide.

X

Of the Faun in his Meditation.

I will walk the sunny wood,
Deep and tranquil as my mood,
And watch how the honeyed sunlight is
Hung in the great boughs of the trees,

And the pattern the branchwork weaves
Under the panoply of leaves,
And how high up two butterflies
Pass, vaulting, out into the skies.
Or, entering a silent glade,
Draw a sharp breath and stand dismayed
At beauty which doth straight present
Such a spasm of ravishment
Sight is confused, and doth confess
Her wreck in voiceless tenderness:
Seeing the flower-decked cherry-trees—
Unruffled ever by any breeze,
Unburned by bright dawn's fiery chill—
Standing celestially still. . . .

Or lay me down 'neath chestnut boughs,
And drowse and dream and dream and drowse,
Drunk with the greenness overhead,
Until a blossom of sharp red,
Shook from her high and scalding place,
Splash with chill scent my upturned face.

XI

f the
osopher

But, lo! amid the woodland green
What mantles of strange blue are seen?
What sage is he who slowly leads
Disciples on and little heeds

The holiness of sylvan haunt,
Where even the silver bird dare chant
But seldom ? where the sunlight lies
Here scalding gold, and yonder dies
Into a humid, still, green gloom ?
Hath not he in the forum room
To vent himself, that now with rude
Rabble he scareth Solitude
From her ultimate hiding-place ?
Now steps he forward a slow pace,
And 'gins his discourse. Hear him prate,
O woods, to silence consecrate ;
Hear him, O flowers, whose golden eyes
Speak more than all Man's orat'ries !—

And his Oration.

Philosopher. Meanwhile, though nations in distress
Cower at a comet's loveliness
Shaken across the midnight sky;
Though the wind roars, and Victory,
A virgin fierce, on vans of gold
Stoops through the cloud's white smother rolled
Over the armies' shock and flow
Across the broad green hills below,
Yet hovers and will not circle down
To cast t'ward one the leafy crown;
Though men drive galleys' golden beaks
To isles beyond the sunset peaks,

And cities on the sea behold
Whose walls are glass, whose gates are gold,
Whose turrets, risen in an hour,
Dazzle between the sun and shower,
Whose sole inhabitants are kings
Six cubits high with gryphon's wings
And beard and mien more glorious
Than Midas or Assaracus;
Though priests in many a hill-top fane
Lift anguished hands—and lift in vain—
Toward the sun's shaft dancing through
The bright roof's square of wind-swept blue;
Though 'cross the stars nightly arise
The silver fumes of sacrifice;
Though a new Helen bring new scars,
Pyres piled upon wrecked golden cars,
Stacked spears, rolled smoke, and spirits sped
Like a streaked flame toward the dead:
Though all these be, yet grows not old
Delight of sunned and windy wold,
Of soaking downs aglare, asteam,
Of still tarns where the yellow gleam
Of a far sunrise slowly breaks,
Or sunset strews with golden flakes
The deeps which soon the stars will throng.

For earth yet keeps her undersong
Of comfort and of ultimate peace,
That whoso seeks shall never cease

To hear at dawn or noon or night.
Joys hath she, too, joys thin and bright,
Too thin, too bright, for those to hear
Who listen with an eager ear,
Or course about and seek to spy,
Within an hour, eternity.
First must the spirit cast aside
This world's and next his own poor pride
And learn the universe to scan
More as a flower less as a man.
Then shall he hear the lonely dead
Sing and the stars sing overhead,
And every spray upon the heath
And larks above and ants beneath ;
The stream shall take him in her arms;
Blue skies shall rest him in their calms;
The wind shall be a lovely friend,
And every leaf and bough shall bend
Over him with a lover's grace.
The hills shall bare a perfect face
Full of a high solemnity;
The heavenly clouds shall weep, and be
Content as overhead they swim
To be high brothers unto him.
No more shall he feel pitched and hurled
Uncomprehended into this world
For every place shall be his place,
And he shall recognize its face.
At dawn he shall upon his path;

No sword shall touch him, nor the wrath
Of the ranked crowd of clamorous men.
At even he shall home again,
And lay him down to sleep at ease,
One with the Night and the Night's peace.
Ev'n Sorrow, to be escaped of none,
But a more deep communion
Shall be to him, and Death at last
No more dreaded than the Past,
Whose shadow in the brain of earth
Informs him now and gave him birth.

The Faun's Anger.

Up, O Faun, up! is he a man
So dares affront the great god Pan?
Creep I now close. . . .
(Has he not heard
Ever the lamb cry as the bird
Descends upon its helpless head
To pluck its eyes out? Blank with dread
Did he ne'er press in stumbling haste
Over the wide moor's tossing waste?
Or, stripped to plunge, did never eye
The sunned pool smiling treacherously,
Despair and terror in his heart?
Hate on him!)
See: he draws apart
That with himself he may commune
The while to a low murmuring tune
Wrung from a golden-stringëd lyre
The young men chant. Hist! Draws he nigher?

Now crouch I mid a thicket where
The spicy hedge-rose warms the air
With giddy scent, and for an hour
Woos with her open-bosomed flower
The full gaze of her lord the sun,
And through whose thorns the sunbeams run
Spangling the cavern of the brake
With chequered shade such as the snake
Loves to repose in, that the heat
Upon his sullen coils may beat,
Breeding within his ancient heart
Such malice that his tongue must dart
Flickering in silence out and in,
The while adown his withered skin,
From horns above his murderous eyes,
The cold surge shudders, ebbs, and dies.

And of the Trick the Faun played, thereby symbolizing the Rule of Pan in Nature.

And now yon comes, with solemn head
Sunk upon breast, with laurel spread
About his thought-bewrinkled brows.
All hail, philosopher! I rouse
Thee by a low and single hiss.
He is frozen still. A sudden bliss
Seizes me, and a branch I shake
As gently as an unseen snake
Swinging toward him.
But he stands,
Clasps and unclasps his gradual hands

In silence save for one long sigh
Of terror.
And I draw more nigh.
Beneath his glazèd eyes I sway
Three leaves upon one stilly spray:
He blenches.
Ha! it was well done,
That final hiss.
I am alone:
For with a harsh cry he has fled
Hideously stumbling, and is led
Speechless away.
The lyre, forgot,
Lies in the grass. . . .

XII

Of the Spring, Frequent Haunt of the Lonely Naiads.

I know a spot
Where, to the sound of water sighing,
The Naiads, when the sun is lying
Heavy on mead and fronded tree,
When birds are silent and the bee
Swoons in the dewed heart of the rose,
Sing hushedly.
I will repose
Upon its banks and to the spring
An answer make with hands that cling
Over this lost lyre's murmurous chords

And with their voiced quiet mingle words
Such as my shrouded soul affords
When the warm blood within my veins
Throbs heavily, and the noon sun reigns,
Who would heaven and earth unite
In one blaze of arduous light,
Till dark woods, fields, bronzed sky, and deep,
In one maniac dull dream sleep.

XIII

THE NAIADS' MUSIC.

The Naiads. Come, ye sorrowful, and steep
Your tired brows in a nectarous sleep:
For our kisses lightlier run
Than the traceries of the sun
By the lolling water cast
Up grey precipices vast,
Lifting smooth and warm and steep
Out of the palely shimmering deep.

Come, ye sorrowful, and take
Kisses that are but half awake:
For here are eyes O softer far
Than the blossom of the star
Upon the mothy twilit waters,
And here are mouths whose gentle laughters
Are but the echoes of the deep
Laughing and murmuring in its sleep.

Come, ye sorrowful, and see
The raindrops flaming goldenly
On the stream's eddies overhead
And dragonflies with drops of red
In the crisp surface of each wing
Threading slant rains that flash and sing,
Or under the water-lily's cup,
From darkling depths, roll slowly up
The bronze flanks of an ancient bream
Into the hot sun's shattered beam,
Or over a sunk tree's bubbled bole
The perch stream in a golden shoal:
Come, ye sorrowful; our deep
Holds dreams lovelier than sleep.

But if ye sons of Sorrow come
Only wishing to be numb:
Our eyes are sad as bluebell posies,
Our breasts are soft as silken roses,
And our hands are tenderer
Than the breaths that scarce can stir
The sunlit eglantine that is
Murmurous with hidden bees.
Come, ye sorrowful, and steep
Your tired brows in a nectarous sleep.

Come, ye sorrowful, for here
No voices sound but fond and clear
Of mouths as lorn as is the rose
That under water doth disclose,

Amid her crimson petals torn,
A heart as golden as the morn ;
And here are tresses languorous
As the weeds wander over us,
And brows as holy and as bland
As the honey-coloured sand
Lying sun-entranced below
The lazy water's limpid flow:
Come, ye sorrowful, and steep
Your tired brows in a nectarous sleep.

The Faun prepares to reply.

Sweet water-voices ! now must I
Unto your sorrowings reply.
But hark ! or ever there can sound
On the lull air the first profound
Few murmurs of my lyre's grave strings,
A voice uprises. Who now sings
The noon's and his own tristfulness ?
A slim youth—in a shepherd's dress,
Yet without sheep—who careless lies
Upon the hill. His shepherd guise
Tokens, perhaps, a poet's heart
Which joys in wandering apart
From the dinned ways where chariots roll,
From the shrill sophist with his shoal
Of gapers, from the angry mart,
From the full eyes and empty heart
Of babbling women, from the neat
Aridity of paven street,

A heart that wandering, musing, sings
The joy, depth, pain of simple things:

The Youth. The earth is still; only the white sun climbs
Through the green silence of the branching limes,
Whose linked flowers hanging from the still tree-top
Distil their soundless syrup drop by drop,
While 'twixt the starry bracket of their lips
The black bee drowsing floats and drowsing sips.
The flimsy leaves hang on the bright blue air
Calm-suspended. Deep peace is everywhere
Filled with the murmurous rumour of high noon.
Earth seems with open eyes to sink and swoon.
In the sky peace: where nothing moves
Save the sun that smiles and loves.
A quivering peace is on the grass.
Through the noon gloam butterflies pass,
White and hot blue, only to where
They can float flat and dream on the soft air. . . .
The trees are asleep, beautiful, slumbrous trees!
Stirred only by the passion of the breeze,
That, like a warm wave welling over rocks,
Loosens and lifts the mass of drowsing locks.
Earth, too, under the profound grass
Sleeps and sleeps, and softly heaves her slumbrous mass.

The earth sleeps. Sleeps the newly-buried clay
Or doth divinity trouble it to live alway ?

No voice uplifts from under the rapt crust.
The dust cries to the unregarding dust.

Over the hill the stopped notes of twin reeds
Speak like drops from an old wound that bleeds:
A yokel's pipe an ancient pastoral sings
Above the innumerable murmur of hid wings.
I hear the cadence, sorrowful and sweet,
The oldest burthen of the earth repeat:
All love, all passion, all strife, all delight
Are but the dreams that haunt earth's visioned
night.
In her eternal consciousness the stir
Of Alexander is no more to her
Than you or I: being all part of dreams,
The shadowiest shadow of a thing that seems,
The images the lone pipe-player sees,
Sitting and playing to the lone, noon breeze.
One note, one life !
They sleep: soon we as these !

XIV

Now plunge I into deepest woods,
Where everlastingly there broods
Such quiet and glamour as must be
Beneath the threshing upper sea.

Here burns no sun, but tawny light
Pervades the vistas still and bright
Of mazy boles and fallen leaves. . . .
I press yet on. At length there cleaves
The twilit hush a pillared gleam.
The leafed floor rises. 'Tis a beam
Of sunlight fallen in a dell
Beyond the mound. There will I dwell,
Soothed by sunned quietude. For there
A carved rock spouts and moists the air
With gross-mouthed pour and rising spray. . . .
Of the Satyrs' Feast. But hark! what festive cries are they
Which greet me as I top the mound?
Below, dispersed and sunk around
The green and golden of the glen,
Lie satyrs; in a leafy den,
Silenus, crowned with vines and roses,
Drowses and starts, blinks, drinks, and dozes.
Banqueting dishes strew the grass,
Goblets of gold and peacock glass,
Flagons, urns, many a brimming bowl,
And horns from which the flushed fruits roll.
High o'er the feast a fronded ash
Hangs full of sunlight, and the splash
Of the spring's leap or gurgeing flow
Into the rippled pool below,
Where lilies rock, shakes up a bright
Eddy of golden tremulous light
Over the leaves. The Oread,

In a hooded lynx pelt clad,
Smiles where she lolls . . . the while twin fauns
With stamping hooves and butting horns
Join combat for a dripping cup
She bears.
But now a shout goes up
At sight of me:

The Invitation.

Satyr. "We feast, we feast;
For, lo! the flaming sun hath ceased
To climb the curve of arid sky,
And his meridian holds on high,
Narrowing with his scorching beams
The chestnut's shade, exhausting streams,
Stilling the woodland singer's note,
Piercing the eyes, shrinking the throat,
Saddening the heart of man and beast.
Yet grieve not we but sprawl and feast.
Leap down, O Faun, then, from thy rocks,
Leap down to us. Bedew thy locks
With such cool spicy nards as dwell
Within this ribbed and rosy shell;
Around thy scalded temples twine
Sprays of this fountain-wetted vine,
And from this golden jorum sip
Nectarous liquor—ay, and lip
Sooth nectarines, thy sunk teeth clench
In melon dripping sherds, and quench
Thy salty thirst anew in flow
Of sparkled or dark wines that glow

With sober warmth and merriment,
Until our gladdened voices blent
Awake the vigour of our feet,
And up we start the grass to beat
With fervent foot, drink, dance again,
And, ever at the loud refrain
Clashing our cups, dance on and on,
Till the noontide lull is gone."

So join I them, and drink and sup,
And fill again the great bowl up;
And, drenched thus down, spin lusty tales
Of toping bouts 'twixt men and whales;
Of the East's Emperor who hath
A pool of wine to be his bath;
Of Hercules his thirst, and how
He did all Ethiopia plough,
And plant with vines, his thirst to sate.
We will discuss the Ideal State,
Whose sky is covered by a vine,
Whose hills are cheese, whose rivers wine,
Whose trees bear loaves brown, crisp and sweet,
Whose citizens do nought but eat,
But eat and drink, drink, eat, and snore,
And eat again, and wish no more
Than so to drink, snore, eat; who find
In this true liberty of mind
And true equality, in this
Fraternity, law, earthly bliss.

So swill again and yet again,
Till a fire flushes all the brain
And, trolling lustily and long,
Each hearty throat bursts into song

Faun and Satyrs. Avaunt, mild-eyed Melancholy!
Welcome, Mirth and mænad Folly!
See about the lifted bowl,
Wrinkled on its bossy scroll,
Ribald nymphs and satyrs jolly
Tussle with a prancing goat;
While Silenus, kneeling, drolly
Proffers a dry bowl unto 't—
Ay, and round the mazer's brim
Boisterous Mermen shouting swim,
And each burly arm lifts up,
Wine that o'erbrims its conchëd cup;
Wherefore pour a triple potion:
If such can be dry in ocean,
'Tis as Titans we must sup!

Avaunt, brow and visage pious:
None but Bacchus boys come nigh us!
Raise the bowl and shout his name:
Io, Bacchus! for a flame
Chafes in our blood, O Bromios!
Fire no water e'er could quench,
And its heat must scorify us

If with wine we do not drench.
Wherefore overbrim the cup:
This to Jove now drink I up,
Who upon thy first of days
Snátched thee and cówed thy natal blaze,
Even as 'tis now the merry
Strength of this thy vintaged berry,
That the scorching danger stays.

To the vine now! let its golden
Leaves about our brows be folden.
To the swarthy hand that trims it!
To the grape! the sun that dims it!
To the pipe that doth embolden
Purpled stamping feet to riot
O'er the vatted winepress olden!
To the cavern's depth, chill, quiet!
Last to wine's own ruddy sprite,
Wakes in rheumy eyes a light—
Ay, and ripens youth to man;
Wine which more works than wisdom can;
Wine that welcomes hardy morrows;
Wine that turns to song our sorrows;
Wine the only magian!

Deep now! every bowl enhances
The world's beauty; see there dances
In the sky the leaping sun!
'Nay, can thine eye catch but one?'

'Six now spin.' 'A seventh advances,
Flares and vomits, swerves and blazes,
Now bursts and countlessly it prances,
Pulsing to my frantic paces!'
'I flame,—gyrate!' 'I shoot out heat!'
'My tricked speech trips, and trip my feet!'
'The earth runs round and heav'n is wheeling!'
'I sway; I reel.' 'Earth's wrecked and reeling!'
'Dance on.' 'Earth's gone.' 'All's white and clear!'
'Ah! Ah! Behind the blaze I hear
The Oread's laughter pealing!'

Avaunt, grief! Descend, O holy
Fierce Bacchic rapture, divine folly!

XV

Of the Faun's Further Wanderings.

Forth from the forest wend I slowly,
While in my ears yet rings the holy
Dithyramb. The noon is past,
But the sun rages. There is cast
A dumbness yet o'er earth and sky.
Down to the river then will I,
Slowly about its depths to swim,
While the stream fondles every limb
And soothes its ache. Deep I will dip,
And, blowing, raise my locks, that drip
Till the slim Hyads troop to see,
And revel, too; and play with me,

Hanging my ears with humid weed
Or mounting me as water steed.
Then, musing I will on, and so
Stray to where a silver slow
River circles through the meads,
Wherein the mooching great ox feeds,
And turns a slow eye round the sky,
Wondering if he can ever die.
And there, mayhap, 'twill come to pass
I'll hear a sweet voice in the grass,
And yet shall mark no singer nigh,
Till, gently peering, I espy
A solemn, elfish child who sits
Unseen mid towering grass, and knits
An endless, endless daisy chain,
Crooning the while some soft refrain
Her mother sings her when she closes
Her twilit eyes.

Little Girl. Three red, red, roses—
One each for father and mother, and one,
The reddest of all, for her baby son.
None for wee Amoret? Oh, none! for she
Some day, when she grows up, a red rose will be!

Of the Faun's converse with Small Child.

Then, crossed-legged mid the meadow-sweet,
I will sink down, laugh low, and greet
Her blue, inquiring, childish eyes
With mine, sharp, merry, brown, and wise,

And tell her tales—of Jack who slew
Ten giants; or Mirabel who flew
On a white owl to find the Prince
And give to him the Golden Quince
Would change him from a roaring bull
To a youth blithe and beautiful;
Or tales of the Goblin and the Sloth,
Who watched the moon and swore an oath
To find out what she was: how these
Explored her mines and found her—cheese.

Thus will I sit and both amuse
Until I rise and beg excuse:
Off ' to El Raschid in Assyria '
Or ' the Grand-Duchess of Illyria,'
Or ' to ask the maiden moon
Why one only of her shoon
She left us last night in the sky,
And not her silver self, and why
She always climbs the self-same track ?
Lets no one ever see her back ?'

XVI

But neither to the moon go I
Or to the river gliding by,
But to the woods, therein to move
Among the quiet glades I love,

Desiring nought but aye to see
The beech, ash, oak, and chestnut tree. . . .
Till I a nymph meet who persuades
Me to the broadest of the glades,
Around whose smooth and sunken space
The far woods lie. For in this place,
Deserted but for a mid-grove
Of maiden trees, bower of the dove,
Pan plays, and should the sylvans chance,
Nymphs, fauns, and sylvans, join in dance.

XVII

...f the ...mmortal ...ance.

On either hand the slender trees
Bow to the caressing breeze,
And shake their shocks of silver light
Against skies marbled greenish-white,
Save where, within a rent of blue,
The tilted slip of moon glints through,
Glittering upon us as we dance
With a soft extravagance
Of limbs as blonde as autumn boughs,
And gold locks floating from moony brows.
While anguished Pan the pipes doth blow
Fond and tremulous and low,
And anon the timbrel shakes.
—It is his sudden heart that breaks
For springs before the world grew old,
Rich vales, and hill-tops fiery cold !—

He watches the scarce moving skies,
The trees, the glittering revelries,
The moon, the dancers lemon-clad:
The world fantastical and sad.

The high-flung timbrels pulse and knock;
We follow in a dancing flock,
Touching each other's finger-tips,
While from between our parted lips
The solemn melodies repeat
The rhythm of our shaken feet.
Then faster! and the round we trace,
Hair flowing from elated face,
Eyes lit, breast bare, with lifted knees,
And hands that toss as toss the trees. . . .
And slow again . . . with cumulate motion,
As the long draw and plunge of ocean
Bursting in a cloud of spray
Up a white, deserted bay
Of the sun-circled green Bermooths,
Whose blistering sands the cool foam soothes. . . .
Next the bewildering pipes may sing
Some simple melody of spring,
Whose cadences remember yet
Sadly lost springs that we forget.
To which as dances April rain
On a still pool where leans no stain,
Save of the cloud's pure splendour spread
Gloriously overhead,

Our fast-flickering feet shall twinkle,
And our golden anklets tinkle,
While fair arms in aery sleeves
Shiver as the poplar's leaves.

And all the while shall Pan sit by
And play, and pause, perhaps, to sigh,
Viewing the scarce-moving skies,
The hushed and glittering revelries,
The infant moon, the slender trees
Silvering to the shivery breeze,
The fair, lorn dancers lemon-clad:
The world fantastical and sad.

XVIII

Thus may we dance the light away
Of yet one more unmemoried day.
But, the dance ended, I will go
Beyond the reach of pipes that blow
A sadness thrilling through my veins. . . .

The Faun's Sadness.

For now within my spirit reigns
Shadow: before whose brooding face,
Silent, there trail on gliding pace
A multitude of restless Fears,
Obscure Griefs and obscurer Tears,
Bewildered Sighs, waned Phantasies,
And all disastrous Presences,

Mutely prophetic of a Woe
I know not yet, but I shall know.

Such power Pan's grief hath to oppress,
And Memory!—since now I guess
Only too well that there must come
Twilight, Calamity, and Doom.

For once I saw beneath an oak
A bard so aged it seemed he woke
That moment from a sleep of years
And in his voice were sleep and tears . . .
Till, wide-eyed, he, raging, spake,
Rocking as when woodlands shake
Under the first urge of the wind,
Whose roaring murk lightens behind.

The Prophecy.

Prophetic Bard. "Be warned! I feel the world grow old,
And off Olympus fades the gold
Of the simple passionate sun;
And the Gods wither one by one:
Proud-eyed Apollo's bow is broken,
And throned Zeus nods nor may be woken
But by the song of spirits seven
Quiring in the midnight heaven
Of a new world no more forlorn,
Sith unto it a Babe is born,
That in a propped, thatched stable lies,
While with darkling, reverend eyes

Dusky Emperors, coifed in gold,
Kneel mid the rushy mire, and hold
Caskets of rubies, urns of myrrh,
Whose fumes enwrap the thurifer
And coil toward the high dim rafters
Where, with lutes and warbling laughters,
Clustered cherubs of rainbow feather,
Fanning the fragrant air together,
Flit in jubilant holy glee,
And make heavenly minstrelsy
To the Child their Sun, whose glow
Bathes them His cloudlets from below. . . .
Long shall this chimed accord be heard,
Yet all earth hushed at His first word:
Then shall be seen Apollo's car
Blaze headlong like a banished star;
And the Queen of heavenly Loves
Dragged downward by her dying doves;
Vulcan, spun on a wheel, shall track
The circle of the zodiac;
Silver Artemis be lost,
To the polar blizzards tossed;
Heaven shall curdle as with blood;
The sun be swallowed in the flood;
The universe be silent save
For the low drone of winds that lave
The shadowed great world's ashen sides
As through the rustling void she glides.
Then shall there be a whisper heard

Of the Grave's Secret and its Word,
Where in black silence none shall cry
Save those who, dead-affrighted, spy
How from the murmurous graveyards creep
The figures of eternal sleep.
Last: when 'tis light men shall behold,
Beyond the crags, a flower of gold
Blossoming in a golden haze,
And, while they guess Zeus' halls now blaze
Shall in the blossom's heart descry
The saints of a new hierarchy!"

He ceased . . . and in the morning sky
Zeus' anger threatened murmurously.
I sped away. The lightning's sword
Stabbed on the forest. But the word
Abides with me. I feel its power
Most darkly in the twilit hour,
When Night's eternal shadow, cast
Over earth hushed and pale and vast,
Darkly foretells the soundless Night
In which this orb, so green, so bright,
Now spins, and which shall compass her
When on her rondure nought shall stir
But snow-whorls which the wind shall roll
From the Equator to the Pole. . . .

Of the Final Nature of Pan.

For everlastingly there is
Something Beyond, Behind: I wis

All Gods are haunted, and there clings,
As hound behind fled sheep, the things
Beyond the Universe's ken:
Gods haunt the Half-Gods, Half-Gods men,
And Man the brute. Gods, born of Night,
Feel a blacker appetite
Gape to devour them; Half-Gods dread
But jealous Gods; and mere men tread
Warily lest a Half-God rise
And loose on them from empty skies
Amazement, thunder, stark affright,
Famine and sudden War's thick night,
In which loud Furies hunt the Pities
Through smoke above wrecked, flaming cities.

For Pan, the Unknown God, rules all.
He shall outlive the funeral,
Change, and decay, of many Gods,
Until he, too, lets fall his rods
Of viewless power upon that minute
When Universe cowers at Infinite!

XIX

So far my mind runs, yet I see
How little faun-philosophy
Repays my heart would learn, not teach. . . .
Better laugh long, lie, suck a peach

Couched under tiger-lily flowers
Which daze the low hot sun with showers
Of fragrance, while the dusty bee
Drones, fumbles, falls luxuriantly
Within their throats; couched, turn a song
Of flowers all the flowers among:

THE FAUN'S AFTERNOON SONG.

There is a vale beyond blue Ida's mount,
  And thither often would I, piping, stray
To listen to the music of a fount
  That spelt her tears out in a Dorian lay.

" Long, long ago," she wept, " Narcissus came
  Wandering down the sunny-shafted glade;
Full weary was he of the lamp's gold flame
  Wavering beneath the dusky colonnade.

" For at the fall of night forth from the dim
  Gardens stole Echo; kneeling by his bed,
With small sweet love-words she importuned him
  Who watched the lamp flame idle overhead.

" Dry was her hot flushed cheek and dark the fire
  In her great eyes; her lips roamed warm and light
Over his arm; her murmurs of desire
  Mixed with the many murmurs of the night.

" In vain ! He came to rest and sing with me
And loll his fingers in the liquid cool,
And drop slow tears, slow tears luxuriously
Into the shadowy motion of the pool.

" With tongue scarce audible I wooed the lad,
Whispering how beneath the drumming fall
Slumbers a rapt, deep lake, so blue, so sad,
That no fish swim it, nor about it call

" Delighting birds from green-bowered shore to shore,
Nor doth the nightingale, when June begins
And the moon mounts a pattin of bright or,
Hymn her long sorrows and her lord's black sins.

" And the boy answered, answered me, and mourned
The loveliness of Echo. ' Yet,' sighed he,
' My soul is fled, and long, thou knowest, bourned
In what far dell none knoweth, love, but thee

" ' Who farest thither ! Sweeter to my ears
Are thy quiet voices and the gentle breast
Of rambling water sweeter than my dear's.'
Then murmured I, ' Lean lower, love, and rest.'

"There was no sound through all the sleeping wood,
Save one sharp cry from Echo, open-lipped,
Who, as she followed, from afar did spy
How to my arms my lover downward slipped.

"Softly I rocked him down into the pool,
Shutting his ears to the loud torrents' din,
And kissed and bore him through the portals cool,
And laid him sleeping the blue halls within.

"So I returned; but never to me came
Another as beautiful, nor shall come.
Lonely I flow, and, flowing, lisp his name,
Till the sky waste and all the earth be dumb."

So sang the spring, and, answering my look,
Through the dark wood from the spring's fountain-head
Flock upon flock of eyed narcissi shook,
And the brook wept in sorrow for the dead.

Ah, Death again! nothing can fend
Us from the Sibyl of the End,
Whose delight 'tis to find new forms,
Now in dull sighs, anon in storms,
Singing, and ever of the same:
The trusting heart betrayed; the flame

Whirled in a night on cities proud;
Lightnings from skies undimmed by cloud;
The wide grave yawned before swift feet;
The small success that brings defeat;
The smiling lips and deadly eyes
Of Destiny walking in disguise.

XX

Of the Evening River.

But now the sun sinks I will go
Whither two full streams meet and flow,
Murmuring as in wedded sleep
Through evening meadows dim and deep.
There will I watch the slow trout rise
At the myriad simmering flies,
And listen to the water flowing
With such faint sounds there is no knowing
Whether its spirit laughs or weeps
Among the dreams wherein it sleeps.

Sunken amid the twilight grass,
I will watch the water pass,
Weaving ever dimmer tales
And dimmer as the evening pales. . . .
Till from the calm the silent lark
Drops to the meadows hushed and dark,
While in the stagnant silver west,
Above the tranquil poplars' crest,

There glimmers through the murky bar
The slowly climbing Hesperal Star.

Thus brooding by the hazy stream,
I shall hear the water dream
Tinkily on, and I shall see,
As my eyes close quietly.
Into a soft and long repose,
The lone star like a silver rose
Fade with me on the drifting stream
Into the quiet night of dream.

Of Night's Rhapsodist.

Yet sleep I not; for lo! there wakes
From the dim water-meadow brakes
A quiring: voice as if a star,
Fallen to earth from midnight far
Beyond the haze of highest cloud,
Bewailed her erred path aloud.
It is the nightingale who sings,
Fanning soft air with whirred wings,
Probing the dark with jewelled eyes.
How oft, how sad, how loud she cries!
And all the echoes answer her;
The night airs through the close wood stir
The stars that through the eddies climb
Glitter; the silver waters chime;
The lily bows her dewy head. . . .

I, too, a sudden tear have shed.
For, ah! what voice is this can make
The vagrant heart within me ache?
That stirs an ancient tenderness,
A new need to console, love, bless
All things that 'neath this warm night sky
Rejoice and suffer, age and die?
Hunger is in my heart like bliss,—
I stretch my arms out and I kiss,
Gathered in sad and sweet embrace,
The whole world's dark and simple face.

XXI

Of the Second Singer. I wander forth. About my feet
The sward is fresh and doubly sweet
The loved air on my salvëd brow.
Be still. Be still. For hearken: now
A second voice behind the grove
Uprises tremulous with love.
How hushed, how moody is the strain!
Pleading—O, surely, not in vain!
Sombrely rises every note,
Lingers, and in dark dells remote
Echoes until another come.

Philomel herself falls dumb.

Philomel herself falls dumb,
Mindful of her shadowy home;

Of a slowly falling surge
Sounding its unending dirge
On an alien ocean's verge;
Of a rain-smitten tower that stood
Fronting the calm, pale rolling flood;
Of a slim sister's beauty glows,
Fatefuller than a midnight rose;
Of the birth, growth, and scheming dire,
Of an accursëd King's desire;
Of night-long vigil, tongueless wrack,
And the last exultation black
O'er loathly offering, feasting sour,
A fell cry in the lonely tower,
Raging pursuit, flight's vain endeavour,
And Vengeance stilling all for ever.—
Save the voice that nightly cries
To the slowly wheeling skies
Of unrest resolved in calm,
Time's tears fallen like a balm,
Sorrows that dead hearts have wrung,
By the sad Enthusiast sung,
Sweeter than Euphrosyne's tongue.

O tremulous voice! who is 't that shakes
The night with fervour?
Through the brakes
Softly I thread . . . emerge, and now
Across the rising meadow's brow

I glimpse, beside the farther wood,
Under the shadow of its hood,
A glimmering shape that does not move.
It is the shepherd and his love:
Close, close they stand, swooning and dim;
Her shadowed face looks up at him,
Her sighing breath his forehead warms;
He sings, she leans within his arms.

THE SHEPHERD'S NIGHT SONG.

The Shepherd. Now arched dark boughs hang dim and still;
The deep dew glistens up the hill;
Silence trembles. All is still.

Now the sweet siren of the woods,
Philomel, passionately broods,
Or, darkling, hymns love's wildest moods.

Danaë, fainting in her tower,
Feels a sudden sun swim lower,
Gasps beneath the starry shower.

Venus in the pomegranate grove
Flutters like a fluttering dove
Under young Adonis' love.

Leda longs until alight
In the reeds those wings of white
She hears beat the upper night.

Golden now the glowing moon,
Diana over Endymion
Downward bends as in a swoon.

Wherefore, since the gods agree,
Youth is sweet and Night is free,
And Love pleasure, should not we ?

The Faun is struck with Sorrow.

Song whose desire her kisses bless !
Song that wreaks wounds no lips redress,
O wounding song ! Such loneliness
Falls, like a stun blow from behind,
That my hands grope, my eyes go blind.
I gasp. . . .
Away, Away, O heart !
Lone, wretched Faun, depart, depart;
Hide thyself, wretched, utterly,
Climb to the clouds where none may see
And mock thy causeless misery !

What joy is mine ? what is 't I have:
Immortal life ? would 'twere a grave.
Thus, thus to suffer world-without-end,
No love, no hope, no goal, no friend !

And the proud, morning Centaur, how
Fares he ? what lot doth Fate allow ?—
More wretched yet ! to live and be
Perfection's lone epitome.

To feel in him a fecund power,
And lack on which to spend that dower! . . .
I mind me now that once I heard
Wise, gentle Pan pronounce this word:
"*Whoever like a God would shine*
Must share the loneliness divine."
Ah! to be Gods, then, is to be
One fierce eternal agony.
Yet, being Gods, such feel no pain;
Their strength is equal to their bane.
While I, poor half-god and half-beast,
I would be man, the last and least
Of men!
O reasoning vain:
Were I but man and one in pain,
I could not by my utmost wipe
One tear away. But now this pipe
He takes Comfort in the Uncommon Gift of God.
Hangs from my neck, god Pan's elect
Gift to his children to perfect
In awe, joy, grief, and loneliness.
Sound, pipe, and with thy note express
All this my heart! to thee I give
All the long days that I must live.

I wander on, I fade in mist,
O peopled World, and dost thou list?
Pipe on, difficult pipes of mine;
There is something in me divine,

And it must out. For this was I
Born, and I know I cannot die
Until, perfected pipe, thou send
My utmost: God, which is

THE END.

BOOK III
POEMS AND PHANTASIES

To

MR. AND MRS. MOISEIWITSCH

A TRIPTYCH

I.—FIRST PANEL: THE HILL

On a day in Maytime mild
Mary sat on a hill-top with her child.
(Overhead in the calm sky's arching
The curled white clouds went slowly marching....
But underneath the blue abyss
All was stiller than water is
Leagues under the surface of the sea.)
And all about her thick and free
Blossomed the dear familiar flowers.
There, while her boy played through the hours,
And the high sun shook gold upon her,
Mary plaited a garland in his honour
Who should be the King of Kings;
And when 'tis done this song she sings,
As Jesus, tired and happy, rests
Curled in the hollow of her breasts:

"In the shadow of my dress,
Out of the sun
And his fierce caress,
Sleep, my son.

" Soft the air about the hill,
Scented, sunny, clear, and still;
Below in the woods the daffodil
Nods, and the shy anemone
Creeps up from the thicket to look on thee,
And ten thousand daisies meet
In an ocean of stars about thy feet.

" Daisies have I strung for thee,
Darling boy,
Wee white blossoms that shall be
Dappled, ah ! so rosily
With thy blood,
When they nail thee to the wood
Cleft from out the crooked tree.
Can it be,
Daisies innocent and good,
That ye star black Calvary ?

" Buttercups I make thy crown,
Darling boy.
(Lullaby, O lullaby !)
Son of sorrow, son of joy,
Pain and Paradise thou art,
Thou that sighest nestling down
In my breast, over my heart
That is a lake
Where the hidden tear-drops ache

To be free,
Till mounting upward for thy sake
Out they break,
Down they plash on me and thee.

" And Heaven in her charity
Drops seven tears on me and thee.

" This thy little childhood's crown,
Flower on flower,
Wear thou in thy lullaby
Till thou facest the soldiers' frown
In thine iron hour,
Till the thorn they crown thee by
They press down:
Ah, the sharp points in my heart!
Ah, the sword, the sudden smart
Flaying me as 'twere a flame!
Crowned indeed, my son, thou art
With red flowers of pain and shame!

" Birds and butterflies and trees,
And the long hush of the breeze
Shimmering over the silken grass,
What wouldst thou have more than these? . .
In the stall the ox and ass
Gazed on thee with tender eyes;
All things love thee; yet there lies

Some hid thing in thee breeds fear—
Brims not falls thy mother's tear.
Wherefore, baby, must thou go ?
Rose, to be torn in sunder so ?
Little bonny limbs, little bonny face,
My lamb, my torment, my disgrace !

" O baby, are thine eyelids closed
Faster than my eyes supposed ?
With foxes must thy bed be maken,
A beggar with beggars must thou go,
To be at last forsworn, forsaken ?
And bear alone thy cross also
Anigh to the foot of a bare hill ?
To hang gibbeted and abhorred,
For passers-by to wish thee ill ?
And to thrust against thy will
Through thy mother's bosom the sharpest sword ?

" O baby, breathing so quietly,
Have thou mercy upon me !
That in thy madness
On thy lonely journey farest,
That understandest not nor carest
For me and my sadness !
Woe indeed ! thou dost not know
Man cometh into this world in sorrow
To spend in grief to-night, to-morrow
In sorrow the third day to go !

"O sleep, dear baby, and, heart, sleep;
Turn to thy slumber, golden, deep,
Of present possible happiness.
Let drop the daisies one by one
Over his body and his dress;
Afflicted eyes, see but thy son
Who sleeps secure from hurt, from harm,
Clasped to my breast, closed in my arm,
Who murmurs as the flowers by the faint wind
shaken,
And, putting forth sweet, sleepy hands,
Feels for the kisses he demands. . . .
Slowly, belov'd, dost thou awaken,
And sure, in heaven there is no sign:
It is not true that thou shalt be taken,
Who for ever, for ever art mine, art mine!"

Into the west the calm white sun
Floated and sank. The day was done.
Mary returned, and as she went,
Above her, in the firmament,
The stars, that are the flowers of God,
Mirrored the flowery earth she trod.
Thus bore she on her destined child,
And while she wept, behold! he smiled,

And stretched his arms seeking a kiss. . . .
Softly she kissed him, and a bliss,
Deeper than all her human tears,
Flooded her and put out her fears.

OXFORD.
Early Spring, 1914.

I.—SECOND AND CENTRE PANEL: THE TOWER

It was deep night, and over Jerusalem's low roofs
The moon floated, drifting through high vaporous woofs.
The moonlight crept and glistened silent, solemn, sweet,
Over dome and column, up empty, endless street;
In the closed, scented gardens the rose loosed from the stem
Her white showery petals; none regarded them;
The starry thicket breathed odours to the sentinel palm;
Silence possessed the city like a soul possessed by calm.

Not a spark in the warren under the giant night,
Save where in a turret's lantern beamed a grave, still light:
There in the topmost chamber a gold-eyed lamp was lit—
Marvellous lamp in darkness, informing, redeeming it!

For, set in that tiny chamber, Jesus, the blessed
and doomed,
Spoke to the lone apostles as light to men en-
tombed;
And spreading his hands in blessing, as one soon
to be dead,
He put soft enchantment into spare wine and
bread.

The hearts of the disciples were broken and full
of tears,
Because their lord, the spearless, was hedgëd
about with spears;
And in his face the sickness of departure had
spread a gloom,
At leaving his young friends friendless.
They could not forget the tomb.
He smiled subduedly, telling, in tones soft as
voice of the dove,
The endlessness of sorrow, the eternal solace of
love;
And lifting the earthly tokens, wine and sorrowful
bread,
He bade them sup and remember one who lived
and was dead.
And they could not restrain their weeping.
But one rose up to depart,
Having weakness and hate of weakness raging
within his heart,

And bowed to the robed assembly whose eyes
gleamed wet in the light.
Judas arose and departed: night went out to the
night.

Then Jesus lifted his voice like a fountain in an
ocean of tears,
And comforted his disciples and calmed and
allayed their fears.
But Judas wound down the turret, creeping from
floor to floor,
And would fly; but one leaning, weeping, barred
him beside the door.
And he knew her by her ruddy garment and two
yet-watching men:
Mary of Seven Evils, Mary Magdalen.
And he was frighted at her. She sighed: "I
dreamed him dead.
We sell the body for silver. . . ."
Then Judas cried out and fled
Forth into the night! . . . The moon had begun
to set;
A drear, deft wind went sifting, setting the dust
afret;
Into the heart of the city Judas ran on and prayed
To stern Jehovah lest his deed make him afraid.

But in the tiny lantern, hanging as if on air,
The disciples sat unspeaking. Amaze and peace
were there.

For *his* voice, more lovely than song of all earthly
birds,
In accents humble and happy spoke slow, con-
soling words.

Thus Jesus discoursed, and was silent, sitting
upright, and soon
Past the casement behind him slanted the sink-
ing moon;
And, rising for Olivet, all stared, between love and
dread,
Seeing the torrid moon a ruddy halo behind his
head.

GRAYSHOTT,
July, 1914.

III.—THIRD PANEL: THE TREE

The crookëd tree creaked as its loaded bough
dipped
And suddenly jerked up. The rope had slipped,
And hideously Judas fell, and all the grass
Was soused and reddened where he was,
And the tree creaked its mirth. . . .
Mid the hot sky
Appeared immediate dots tiny and high,
Till downward wound in batlike herds
Black, monstrous, gawky birds,
And, narrowing their rustling rings,
Alit, talons foremost. And with flat wings
Flapped in the branches, and glared, and croaked
and croaked,
While no compassionate human came and cloaked
The thing that stared up at the giddy day
With pale blue eyeballs and wry-lipped display
Of yellow teeth closed on the blue, bit tongue.
Overhead the light in silence hung,

And fiercely showed the sweaty, knotted hands
Clutching the rope about the swollen glands. . . .
And the birds croaked and croaked, evilly eyeing
The thing so lying,
Which no commiserate pity came and cloaked,
But which soaked
The earth, so that the flies
Dizzily swung over its winkless eyes,
And in a crawling, shiny, busy brood
Blackened the sticky blood,
And tickled the tongue-choked mouth that sought
to cry
Bitterly and beseechingly
Against the judgment of th' unflinching sky.

The poor dead, lonely thing had not a shroud
From that still, frightful glare until a cloud
Of darkness, flowing like a dye
Over the edges of the sky,
Browned and put out the silent sun:
A benison
Of three hours' space.
And it had power
To put a shadow into that thing's face,
And th' invisible birds fell silent by its grace.

Thus Judas lay in shadow and all was still. . . .

Then faint light, like water, began again to fill
The sky, and a whisper—came it from the grass,
Whispering dry and sparse,
Or from the air beyond the neighbouring hill ?—
Ebbed, as a spirit on a sigh
Passing beyond alarm:
"*It is finished!*"
And there was calm
Under the empty tree and in the brightening sky.

GRAYSHOTT,
July, 1914.

FOUR SONGS FROM "THE PRINCE OF ORMUZ"

I.—THE PRINCE OF ORMUZ SINGS TO BADOURA

When she kisses me with her lips, I become
A Roc, that giant, that fabulous bird
And over the desert, vast, yellow, and dumb,
I wheel, and my jubilant screaming is heard,
A voice, an echo, high up and glad,
Over the domes and green pools of Bagdad.

But when she kisses me with her eyes,
My heart melts in me; she is my sun;
She strokes my snow; I am loosed, I arise:
A brook of water I run, I run,
Crystal water, sunny and sweet,
Laughing and weeping to fawn at her feet.

Lawford,
Easter, 1914.

II.—THE SONG OF THE PRINCESS BESIDE THE FOUNTAIN

My rose, or ever the three tears were shed
I wished lie in its bosom, has fallen apart;
Off their knapped golden hair all my pure pearls have sped
Before their mid-ruby could burn on my heart.
To-day is as yesterday; as to-day so to-morrow;
But fallen my rose, pearls, tears,
Fallen in sorrow.
Or ever I woke it was sunset to-day;
As fast flows the fountain, as fast flows away,
As fast fall away
My rose and my tears, my pearls and my sorrow.

In Hospital,
January, 1916

III.—THE SONG OF THE PRINCE IN DISGUISE

The look in thine eyes can change me utterly;
Thine eyes challenge: my heart is lighted,
I am thy taper, I burn straight-pointed—
Ay, even so doing I waste away.

Bathe me in thy calm eyes' soft glances;
I am thy slave, I bow, I worship;
Bid me to steal, and I will steal gladly:
Ah! bid me not, thou robbest my manhood.

Let thine eyes smile: change comes upon me,
I put forth blossoms, flowers of my passion,
Roses crimson, alas! whose petals,
Once white, now blush with blood of my heart.

Gaze not on me: I burn, I perish;
Gaze not on me: I am thy servant;
Gaze not on me: I sink a-bleeding;
Yet gaze! I cannot otherwise live.

Lawford,
Easter, 1914.

IV.—THE PRINCESS BADOURA'S LAST SONG TO HER LOVER

I HAVE poured my wine into a gold cup,
I have plucked my roses, unfastened the stone
From my bosom. Thou mayest drink my red wine up,
Or spill where my jewel and roses are thrown.

The golden-globed night deepens quickly over
Me, afraid under its curtains. The spheres
Stare. O gather me swiftly, my lover;
Make me forget and forgive me these tears.

LAWFORD,
Easter, 1914.

THE GIFT OF SONG

THE GIFT OF SONG

Beyond a hill and a river,
Within a tower of stone,
A Princess by a casement
Dreamed, sitting still, alone.

Her golden hair hung heavy
Over her kirtle green;
Her eyes were blue and lonely,
Her tender mouth had been

A joy for splendid kisses,
It was so red, so red;
But it was parted in singing,
And, beginning her song, she said:

"Three songs in my spirit:
Elusive, tremulous, light.
If you can feel their tremor,
This gift is spended aright."

Without in the silent garden
The sunflowers dozed in the sun,
Bees blackened their tawny faces,
Their heads drooped one by one.

Amid a stilly fig-tree,
Hidden from sun and sight,
A nightingale sang over
The songs that rejoice the night.

And browsing upon sweet grasses
In the fair solitude,
Half in sun, half in shadow,
A lordly bay stag stood.

Upon earth all was silent
Save when the hid bird sung;
In the dark blue afternoon heavens
A silent half-moon hung.

. . . . .

As she commenced singing,
The nightingale stopped. In the dead
Silence the leaves flicked softly;
The great stag turned his head.

. . . . .

Thus sung she alone, and only
The stag, the fig-tree, the bird
And pensive moon in the darkling heavens
Her lovely singing heard.

And as she finished singing,
She bowed her golden head
Low, O low, on her shaking bosom,
And, ending her song, she said:

"Three songs in my spirit:
Elusive, tremulous, light.
You have felt their tremor;
This gift is spended aright."

The nightingale lifted her voice up,
The moon fled out of the skies,
The fig-tree split, and two tears rolled
Out of the great stag's eyes.

Now, when she had done singing,
She closed her eyes, and her breath
Went out as she lay down backward
And folded her hands in death.

Lyme Regis,
July 6, 1916.

FRAGMENTS FROM A DRAMA ON THE SUBJECT OF ORESTES

I.—WARNING UNHEEDED

Kassandra. I cried in the halls where the feast will be set;
The hurrying servants whom I met
Brushed me aside, asked why I tarried.
On their black woolly heads gold platters they carried,
Piled high with rich fruits; betwixt jewelled hands,
Goblets of crystal, white blossoming wands,
Urns breathing incense: all these to be set
Where Truth's feast and the feasters too soon shall be met.

The guest shall turn as he laughs and sups,
Reaching his hand for the golden wine;
His face shall change as he sees next to him
A mouth that mocks, eyes that look through him,
A head sink her glistening brow 'twixt the cups,
Locks blackening his stoup with a liquor of brine.

In the scrolls of the platter of gold there has bled
The juice of fruit battered and hairy and red;

The goblets of crystal are fissured and cracked
Like ice the bronze tyre of the chariot has wracked,
And the blossoms curl withered because of the heat
Of urns overset by the slip of red feet
When the reveller fell forward unable to save
His eyes from the torch, his groin from the glaive.

Chorus. For Truth rejected returns as Pain.

Cassandra. Under the trestles the guests lie slain;
The curtains upon the gold cords pull
Heavily, sagging like nets that are full,
For curved in the trough and propped in the fold
The red, red catch lies tossed and rolled;
The halls and corridors reek with the flood;
The pillars are trickled with cyphers of blood;
Rent garlands lie trampled over the floors;
Rusty footprints lead out through the high bronze doors
To the starlit night and the whispering plain:

Chorus. For Truth rejected returns as Pain.

Cassandra. I weep for the ruin of a high, proud house;
Moths fret the still curtains; down the throne runs a mouse;

The sun fades on the floors heaped high with
dead leaves;
The moon runs on the rills that run from the
eaves;
Brown clogs the peristyle; the air has a tang;
Weeds rot on the terrace; the hanging gates clang;
The wind is a weariness; man lives in vain

Chorus. Where Truth rejected returns as Pain.

1914-1916.

II.—ORESTES TO THE FURIES

Ye are no madman's dreams, then! . . .
Out sword! Backward tread
O curs that circle the bright blade ye dread.
Back to where dead-eyed Hate, your shameful priest,
Prepares your bowl of blood, your fleshy feast:
Where in the thronged and long-hushed market-place
Ten thousand faces gaze on one pale face;
Where the lost victim feels the lonely ban
Of death terrific loosed by man on man;
Where black blood froths, where drives the whirring wheel;
Where hands, ears, lips fall lopped of instant steel;
Where the intent and dazzling pincher plies
Till to the silent torturers Anguish cries
At once for death! and when sharp death is given,
Others, corded and swooned, antic and sick, are driven

Under the axe, whose sheeny flash and fall
Bids the block ring as pile beneath the maul,
Till Man's protest dies to a whisper, dumb
Beneath the maddened rolling of Death's drum!

1915.

BLACK SONG

I.—AT BRAYDON

Day wanes slowly;
On the hill no sound
Save the wind uttering
Chords low . . . few . . . profound.

How the west smokes and quivers!
It sears, it blinds my sight;
I am burned out wholly,
Hide me from the light.

Within dear arms yoke me,
Gather me. I am sped
Into your little bosom
Press, hide my childish head.

How long I have struggled
I know not; but the past
Seems twice livelong,
Beaten at the last!

My soul leaps and shudders
In pain none understands;
With your clear voice calm it,
Soothe it with your hands.

I can say only
—So lost am I, so distressed—
"I love you: I am tired."
You must guess the rest.

I love you: I am tired.
I give you my soul,
It hurts me. Hate has lamed it.
Take it; make it whole.

Late Summer, 1916.

II.—MIDDAY ON THE EDGE OF THE DOWNS

Stillness falls and a glare.
The woods in darkness lie.
The fields are stretched and stare
Under the empty sky.
Vacant the ways of the air,
Along which no birds fly.
Only the high sun's flare
Spills on the empty sky.

I lift my aching eyes
From the dry wilderness:
Across me a peewit flies
With gestures meaningless. . . .
Mine are his piping cries
At this world's emptiness!

1913.

III.—IN DORSETSHIRE

Cold and bare the sunlight
Drifted across the hill,
Round which the sea wind's current
Unfathomable and chill,
From dawn to silver sunset
Poured now faint, now shrill.

"How to comfort you,
Share any part?
Even to understand you
Too deep an art!
Yet I'd comfort you,
Tear out my heart."

"Do not look on me,
Dry eyes for my sake;
Do not smooth my forehead
Your hands make me ache;
O, and turn away your kisses
Or heart must break."

Cold and bare the sunlight
Drifted across the hill,
Only the sea-wind's current,
Unfathomable and chill,
Heard such speech gather,
Bewail itself . . . fall still.

Toward the hill then zigzagged
One wind-harried plover—
Rocked for a moment . . .
Cried to love and lover
The top of loneliness
Ere he heeled over.

MAN'S ANACREONTIC AND OTHER POEMS

MAN'S ANACREONTIC

Kiss ! Kiss me and kiss again,
Make kissing almost pain;
Close your fingers close on mine,
And our grappling looks entwine;
Kiss again, and when that's done
Blind me with each facing sun
Of your clear and golden eyes,
Till my spirit in me dies,
And endures a long eclipse
Till rekindled at your lips.

From this minute I pursue
The intense Idea that's you—
Your you's Being. I would draw
You from Obscurity's dusk maw
Into my hands—whate'er you are,
Moth or spirit, gnome or star.
Yet I would not filch a part,
Misty soul or flaming heart,
Which left but, as doth the snake,
A pale tissue. I will take

And shut all your sweetness up
In the gold walls of a cup,
Sandalled feet to sweeping hair,
Soul, brain, body, all you are—
Curled as a mermaid coiled in brine,
Now drunk one gush of giddy wine!

Nay, as a strange lump of snow
In my two hands you shall go,
And I'll bare my browny breast,
Press you there, where now you rest!
Ay, and bless the frozen smart
As you melt into my heart!

Come, I'll twine you round my brows:
A defiant diadem,
Poets of your light shall sing.
Satraps by you swear stout vows
Eyeing my twice-marvellous gem—
You: the emerald in my ring.

Thus I'll keep you night and day,
Since no stone can run away—
And might dare a pleasure splendid:
Toss my ring into the air,
Watch it spinning, heart suspended,
Lest it slip me unaware,
Fall clean through my finger bars,
Shatter in ten thousand stars!

Yet you shall not be my ring
You shall not be any thing,
Crown or stone set cunningly
Time can separate from me.

No! I'll find an alchemist,
With a beard of cobwebs grey
And fired eyes like moonstones kissed
By the last gold beam of day,
And older and gentler than a fish,
And wiser than an elephant;
And when I've told him what we wish,
Bribe or force him work our want.

We two shall opposëd stand,
Each touch other's finger-tip;
At a slow pass of his hand
And a soft word from his lip,
We will incline smilingly,
And as drops together run,
Shaking off the he and she,
Close and be for ever one.

GRAYSHOTT,
Summer, 1914.

THE BLACKBIRD

I STAND in a sunny garden;
A blackbird sings overhead:
"I'm alive . . . I've a love . . . the sun's shining
And where's the man would be dead?"

"Blackbird, make an ending of fluting
That song down your orange beak:
I'm alive . . . I've a love . . . the sun's shining,
And—I am the man you seek."

STAMFORD,
May, 1913.

CHANGE

Behold, the tides are awake!
Under the high moon's light,
Broad bands of silver, they glitter and quake,
Moving out into the night.

Off from the shore they slide,
Out, out into the blue:
And I am turned to a shimmering tide
Flooding on outward to you!

Hengistbury Head,
Spring, 1915.

TRANSFIGURATION

Two feet apart, straight-limbed on the heathered
hill
We lie, under the wavering haze
Of the sun, even as two logs that lie still
In the heart of a blaze.
Side by side we lie through the long
Late noon together;
On us the light wind stoops his strong,
Hot, sweet scents of heather.
No word breaks the air that smothers,
Lest we miss
The dull heart-beat of the earth below each
other's,
And the soft kiss
Of breathless heather upon heather, while the
sun
Beats on us encouraging the swiftening blood,
Till up the limbs and through the ears it run,
A thin, red singing flood.

Love hath put in me might,
That was so weak;
I am strong with light,
My senses seek

Something indefinable, afar;
They go wandering, and return . . .
With the light drunk off a star
They calmly burn,
Even as the immense sun burns on us
Till evening turns watery those beams of his;
And, rising from that joyance onerous,
I stoop a kiss
Lighter than the balls of fluff
The wind sways across the heath,
Though each invisible, hot puff
Scarce rocks a spray beneath.

I sit, and it is so still,
Now wind and sun have gone home,
I can almost hear distil
The dew in the gloam.
And from the clear and cool
Of the twilit air,
That is still as a pool
Iced over and bare,
I catch at length
The thought I have been searching for:
Did I absorb the sun's or just your strength,
Or Something More ?

Summer, 1914.

PLAINT OF PIERROT ILL-USED

I AM Pierrot, and was born
On some February morn
When through glistering rain shone down
The full moon on Paris town.
(Ah the moonshine in my head !)

For, upon the fatal minute
When the moon's heart changes in it
And the tides their flow reverse,
I, for better or for worse,
Born was. (Better been born dead
Than with moonwork in my head !)

Clown stood foster, but another
Got me of Clown's wife my mother,
And as suited my poor station,
Thieving was made my profession:
Doorsteps often were my bed
(Frosty moonshine in my head).

Yet while Pierrot was a thief—
Miracle beyond belief,
Chance fantastic as divine!—
I fell in with Columbine:
Dark eyes, lips of mournful red
(Dark-bright moonshine in my head).

At the corner of the street
She and I by night would meet;
Met, but never told our love,
While th' ironic moon above
In her reverie smiled, and shed
Tranquil radiance round each head.

Till my father by a breath
Stifled at the hands of Death,
"—Since no other children were—
Assigned me as only heir."
(Silver sequins heaped and spread:
Billowing silver in my head.)

So, in search of fitting knowledge,
Poor Pierrot was sent to college,
Where Pantaloon and Pantaloon
In answerless riddles o' the moon
Crammed more moonshine in his head.

Home, then, Pierrot by-and-by
Hurried spent, resolved to sigh

Headache, heartache, and the rest,
Out on Columbine's white breast,
White as the moon's cloudy bed
(Hush the moonshine in my head).

But, while gone, had entered in
Spangled, smiling Harlequin;
Laughter cynic and unholy:
"Pah! Pierrot's poor melancholy!"
Turned but not a word I said
(Moons like swords within my head!)

Forth: but money burns so bright!
Let it burn, then, left and right:
"Where, O where, is Punchinello?
Scaramouch too, that gay fellow?
A brisk life it is we'll lead:
Drown the moonshine in my head!"

Midnight: Venus by an urn,
Roses and rose lanterns burn,
Wine, fount's purl, and mandoline. . . .
Pulcinella waits within,
Faithless she—but in her bed:
No more moonlight in my head!

Ah! . . .
yet dawns a dreary morrow:
'Spend at ease, and owe in sorrow,'

With light purse to her begone,
If but as a hanger-on!
(Dread and moonlight in my head.

Home then: catch upon the way—
'Harlequin fled yesterday.
Bankruptcy of his employ.'
Surging of relief and joy:
Welcome then? past words unsaid?
Surge of moonlight through my head.

So on, beating, to her street:
What sight Pierrot's eyes doth greet?
One coach at her door arrives,
From the back another drives. . . .
Strange! (mere moonlight in the head).

Pull the bell: is she within?
'I must see Miss Columbine.'
Maid with finger laid by nose,
Better not inquire too close—
Such puts bullets through the head!

Now I wander back and forth;
Pierrot goes east, south, west, north;
Shakes his head and shrugs his shoulders,
Till the more acute beholders,
Watching him, have hazarded,—
'Touch of something in the head?'

I am Pierrot, and was born
On some far forgotten morn
When the cold moon on the pane
Struck and, signless, 'gan to wane,
When the tides their flow reversed;
And I bear, uncured, accursed,
Aching until I am dead,
Moonlight, moonlight in my head!

DEVONSHIRE,
November, 1916,

GIRL'S SONG FROM "THE TAILOR"*

O SILVER bird, fly down, fly down,
  Bring thy fair gifts to him and me:
A purse contains a minted crown,
  A golden ring for me.
Ah! lovely bird, fly down, fly down.

But upon the highest bough
  See amid the leaves he swings,
Pipes three notes of laughter low,
  Flirts, and folds his flashy wings.
Ah! lovely bird, fly down, fly down.

What is't, bird, thy soul demands?
  Come, I'll rock thee in my breast;
I will stroke thee with my hands;
  Where none rested thou shalt rest. . . .
Ah! lovely bird, fly down, fly down.

* "The Tailor," opera-buffa in three acts, being Op. 10 of Bernard van Dieren.

Jewels wouldst thou, then, O bird ?
  See, among the sunny grass
A tear has fallen unseen, unheard,
  Brighter than ever diamond was.

Hark ! Hark ! His joy my voice doth drown :
See, see, he leaps, floats, dives him down !

1916.

LAST SONG IN AN OPERA

From the apple bough many petals fly tossed
of the wind,
Yet goldenly heavy it hangs on blue autumn eves
(*All things come unto him whose heart believes*).
The dove, though the tempest-swept sun her
bright eyes blind,
Beats onward fast.
Till with clapped, sailing wings down at the last
To the loved cote she come.
Ah, the long way of Love, but Love comes home!

The silver river wanders and circles time out of
mind,
Yet turns at length where the sea tosses her
smoking sheaves
(*All things come unto him whose heart believes*).
So golden-feathered Love beats his high course,
though blind,
Until that hour
When, downward stooping through the flaming
shower,
Into the heart he come.
Ah, the long way of Love, but Love comes home!

1916.

DANAË

MYSTERY IN EIGHT POEMS

DANAË: MYSTERY IN EIGHT POEMS

I

" What with clangour, clangour of iron din,
Do they beat till daylight ring ?
What heat, that I see the night air spin,
And sparks dance over the scaffolding ?

" The birds have flown because of their strife
Hammering difficult metal;
Their reek has taken my roses' life,
Dripping white petal on petal.

" What glows gold taller than earthly tree
In that maze of mast on mast
Of the scaffolding ? What can it be
They build so secret and fast ?"

II

" What art mooning at, fool ?
Some wanton boy and his limbs ?
Such dreams should be put to school:
I'll chasten these fleshly whims !"

He has shot the bolts on her room
In the brazen tower.
'Remain there, ninny: your doom
Till the sand sifts your last hour!"

With eyes grieving on space,
Has she sight among all these blind?
Because of her dreaming face. . . .
How harshly the great keys grind!

They have gone. She clenches her hands,
She struggles and makes soft moan. . . .
Then smiles, for she understands:
The soul is never alone.

III

"Last night as I was sitting,
My faint heart ceased to beat,
Listening in the silence
To the tread of nearing feet.

"Through the tower dumb in midnight
They passed from floor to floor,
Till at length they halted
Hard without my door.

"I knew 'twas Thou who stood'st there,
With but a door's divide!
With a wild and longing motion
I strode and flung it wide.

"Out into velvet darkness
My whirring eyeballs stare.
I whisper. Nothing answers.
And there is no one there."

IV

Canticle

"O Day so bright,
Bring thou my Love to me,
In blinding, deep delight
And ecstacy.

"O Night so wide,
So black, keep close till He,
The light within my side
Seen, comes to me.

"O wandering Wind,
Sing in His ears the sum
Of longing, mad His mind,
Compel He come.

"Earth I adore,
From whom to whom I go,
Bring Him to me before
I return so.

"Sun, nought doth let
In journey or depart;
Make Him, arisen, set
Within my heart.

"O high white Moon,
Alone and glittering,
As you pull ocean soon,
My Belovëd bring.

"O swelling Sea,
Cavernous in your sweep,
Make Him ingulph, drown me
Far in His deep.

"O Day, O Night,
O Moon, O Sun, O Sea,
O Wind, bring my Delight!
Bring Him to me!"

V

In the second watch of the night
The amazed guards saw with affright
Gold stars fall in a shower:
Coins of gold in a sweeping flight,
They silently broke on the tower.

And the tower's top turned a rose
Of enwreathed, ruddy light,
And, like men smit of their foes,
The guards fell at the sight. . . .

And the Rose possessed the tower alone
All the blue, windless night.

VI

"Soft torrential wind
Falls through the vast, still deep
Like thick dreams pouring behind
The opened gates of sleep:
Ah, not so swift, Lord, not so bright,
Lest I be blown—a feather;
Not so white, not so white,
Lest I be withered altogether.

"Earth shifts under my feet,
Glory breaks over my head;
Speechlessly my wings I beat,
And fall mute in breathless dread:
Ah, not so swift, Lord, not so bright,
Lest I be blown—a feather;
Not so white, not so white,
Lest I be wilted altogether."

VII

"Mine is a heavenly Lover,
In Him I am wholly blest;
My heart it is His coffer
Wherein His gold doth rest.

"Dead in the metal tower
I lie till night doth come,
When in a golden shower
He bursts the midnight dome;

"And, caught beyond releasing,
I yield me to His claim,
And by my creature ceasing
All that He is I am."

VIII

The silver sun looks down
On the silent tower;
The guards awaken, nor own
To the unguarded hour.

They eye each other's face,
But to speak none durst;
As though the night were ungraced,
Silent they are dispersed.

The cruel King climbs, doth draw
Near, then by he creeps,
Marking in rage and awe
The smile in which she sleeps.

STAMFORD,
Autumn, 1912, *and Autumn*, 1913.

THE ECSTASY

I LAY upon a headland hill:
  The sun spilt out his gold;
The wind blew with a fluttering thrill;
  The skies were blue and cold.

All day above the little cove
  I heard the long wind flow;
The clouds foamed in the blue above,
  The blue sea foamed below.

All day the bare sun fiercely burned;
  All day in the profound
And quivering grass my body turned,
  One with Earth's turning round.

Till, fledged amid her fluid rings,
  My soul began to rouse,
And slowly beat her silver wings
  Within her darkened house.

Then with vans lifted up for flight,
With stretched and fiery crest,
Upward she leaped toward the light
And drew from out my breast.

How long I lay while she was fled,
And on the cliff below
My body lay stiff, dark, and dead,
I knew not nor may know.

But long it seemed. Sped beyond sight
My soul enjoyed release;
Beyond the clouds, within the light,
She entered into peace.

. . . . .

To-day, amid a world of men,
How often must I cry:
"Happy I never was but then
Nor shall be till I die!"

Near Gold Cap,
Late Summer, 1916.

THE WATER-LILY

The Lily floated white and red,
  Pouring its scent up to the sun;
The rapt sun floating overhead
  Watched no such other one.

None marked it as it spread abroad
  And beautifully learned to cease:
But Beauty is its own reward,
    Being a form of Peace.

1913.

DEEM YOU THE ROSES . .

Deem you the roses taste no pleasure
  Unfolding hour by hour
Toward, through starlit peace and sunny leisure,
  Their sharpest moment, when they dower
  This great green world, this rustling place,
  Active in music, light, and grace,
With their hid hearts, their golden treasure,
  Odours so deep they overpower ?

See how, hazed in the sunny weather,
  The silken roses swim,
Nodding heads frail as a high cloud's feather,
  Expressing Joy in Beauty's Hymn.
  And, hark ! from many a hidden face
  Echoes I hear through silver space:
The Morning Stars that sing together,
  And the delighting Seraphim !

Lawford,
Early Summer, 1916.

THE PASSION

Those whose Love, unborn to sight,
  Never did itself disclose
  Save in water's cry; a rose;
Meteor furrowing the night;

Mote of any turning ray;
  Pipe of bird mid sunset's flush;
  Rain stilled, leaves flame-wet, and hush
Of a rainbow's fire and spray;

Any straight road leads afar
  'Cross a hill-brow—What's beyond?
  Seven hung notes of music fond;
Seven dark poplars, one white star;

Cloud lifting a tower aloft;
  Light and play and shadowy grace
  Of the soul behind a face
Flitting by on motion soft;

Lonely figure on a height;
  Those whose love but shines a hint
  Fainter than the far sea's glint
To the inland gazer's sight—

These alone, and but in part,
  Guess of what my songs are spun,
  And Who holds communion
Subtly with my troubled heart.

But the substance of my grief
  Scarcely can their thought surmise,
  Who but glimpse through these my eyes
Joy as fathomless as brief.

Others in this strange world flung,
  Orphans, too, of Destiny,
  Have the virtue, but not I,
Keeps heart crystal, single tongue;

And know not, whose hearts are whole,
  How—when sickened and unclean,
  Unfit or to see, be seen—
Close thorns pack and prick the soul.

Yet though here soul suffereth,
  Complicate by vision's light,
  Never would I cede this right
Of a sharpened life and death.

For I keep in confidence
In my breast a subtle faith
'Scapes alway by narrow scathe
And I draw my succour thence.

One Day, or maybe one Night—
Living ? dying ?—I shall see
The Rose open gloriously
On its heart of living light.

Know what any bird may mean,
Meteor in my heart shall rest,
Spelled on my brain blaze th' unguessed
Words of the rainbow's dazzling sheen.

O the hour for which I wait!
Lovers of the Secret Love
Watch with me, and we will prove
Constancy can be elate.

For the sigil we have now
Is but echo, shadow, less
Than a nothing's nothingness,
To what that hour will allow:

Lost and found! The Shining Ones!
Music, passion, scent, delight,
Light and depth and space and height:
Heaven and its seven suns!

Dorset Square,
October, 1916.

LAST WORDS

O LET it be
Just such an eve as this when I must die!
To see the green bough soaking, still against a sky
Washed clean after the rain.
To watch the rapturous rainbow flame and fly
Into the gloom where drops fall goldenly,
And in my heart to feel the end of pain.
The end of pain: the late, the long expected!—
To see the skies clear in a sudden minute,
The grey disparting on the blue within it,
And on the low far sea the clouds collected.

In that deep quiet die to all has been,
To be renewed, to bud, to flower again:
My second spring!—whose hope was nigh rejected
Before I go hence and am no more seen.

To hear the blackbird ring out, gay and bold,
The low renewal of the ringdove's moan
From among high, sheltered boughs, and ceaseless fall

Pitter, pitter, patter,
A dribble of gold
From leaves nodding each on the other one,
The hush, calm piping and the slow, sweet mood!
To drink the ripe warm scent of soaking matter,
Wet grass, wet leaves, wet wood,
Wet mould,
The saddest and the grandest scent of all.

So when my dying eyes have loved the trees
Till with huge tears turned blind,
When the vague ears for the last time have
hearkened
To the cool stir of the long evening breeze,
The blackbird's tireless call,
Having drunk deep of earth-scent strong and kind,
Come then, O Death, and let my day be darkened.

I shall have had my all.

LAWFORD,
April, 1916.

PRINTED BY
BILLING AND SONS, LIMITED
GUILDFORD, ENGLAND

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